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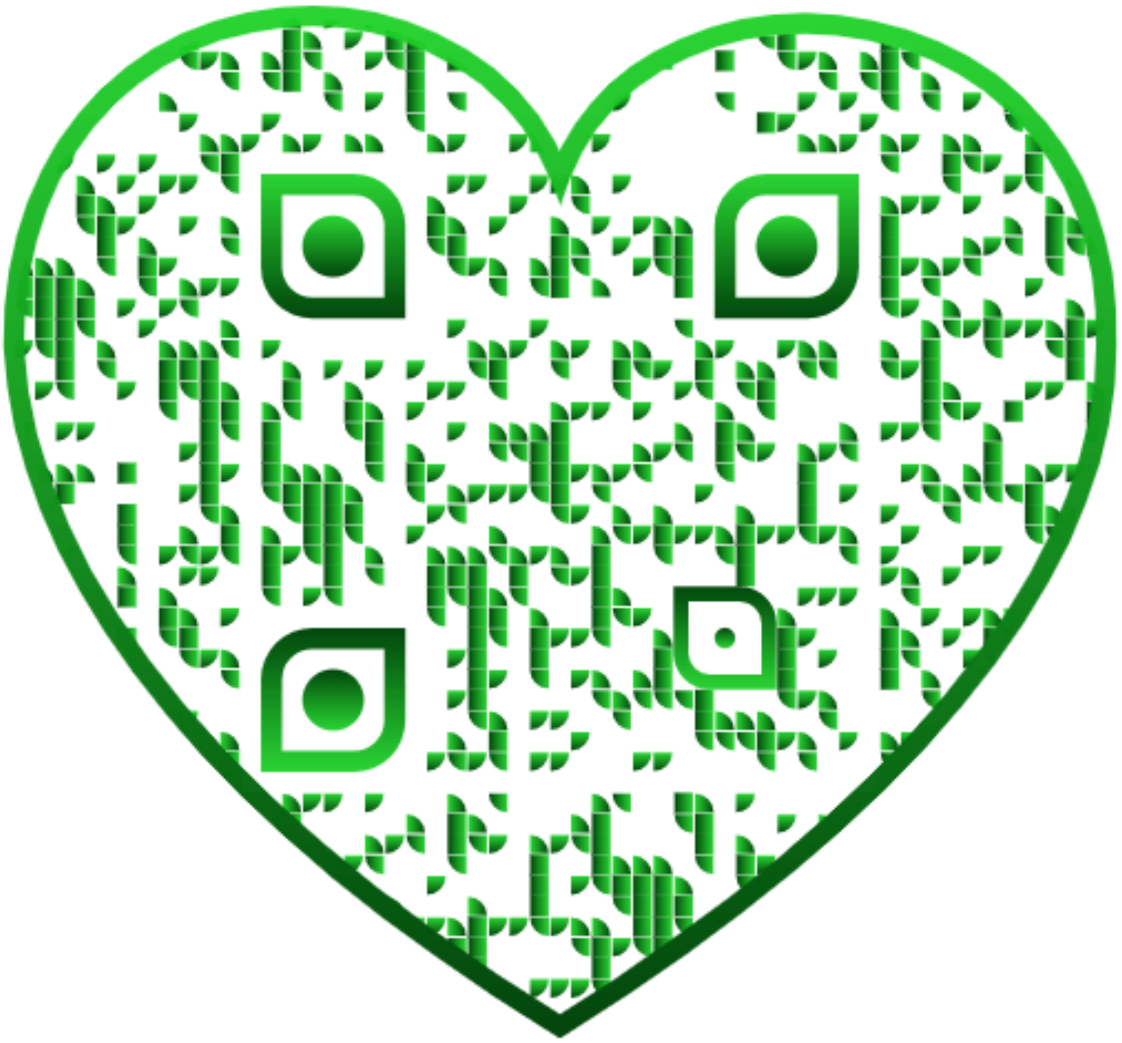

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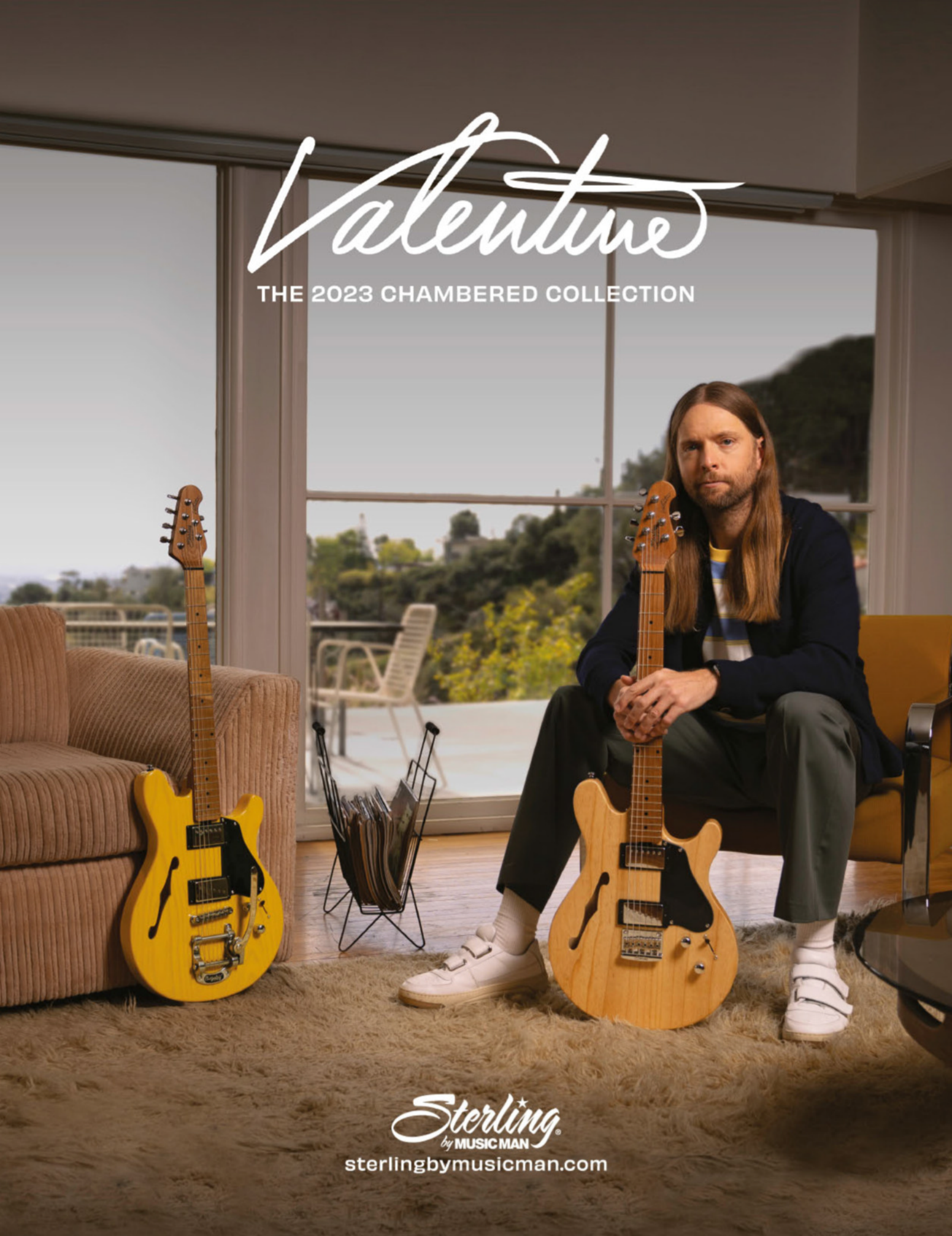
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JEN ROSENSTEIN

COVER PHOTO: JEN ROSENSTEIN / JENROSENSTEIN.COM

WOODSHED

VOL. 44 | NO. 9 | SEPTEMBER 2023

WELCOMES... AND FAREWELLS

I HEREBY WELCOME Sophie Lloyd to the *GW* cover club. It's a joy to watch — or to witness — guitarists spring up, basically out of nowhere, to achieve such high levels of acclaim in this, um, interesting modern age of ours. I joined *GW* in 2011, and I've witnessed a few bright careers in the making, including *GW* cover stars Billy Strings, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Jake Kiszka, Rob Scallon and Wolfgang Van Halen (although, hmmm, Wolf *did* share a *GW* cover with this dad in 2008). BTW, I'd add the amazing Nita Strauss to this list, but she was definitely doing her thing before 2011.

Back to Sophie: Somewhere in Joe Bosso's interview, Lloyd says, "People always say, 'You haven't paid your dues,' but I feel as though I've done that in a different way." I agree. And what does "paying your dues" even mean in 2023? Isn't building a massive online following *over the course of several years* paying your dues? Isn't somehow shifting from the digital empire onto major stages like MSG, Wembley Arena and the oddly named "KFC Yum! Center" paying your dues? Lloyd's is definitely a unique story, and although I have zero inside information, I can promise you that her current stint with Machine Gun Kelly is still just the beginning.

FAREWELL TO MICK HUTSON: As I was tracking down the photos for this issue's Opeth feature a few months ago, the photographer's name jumped out at me: Mick Hutson. "There's that name again," I said. "We've probably used about a billion of his photos in *GW*." Sadly, it turns out that Hutson died June 1 at age 58. Besides *GW* and countless other music mags, his photos were used on official album releases by Nirvana, AC/DC, Primal Scream, Queens of the Stone Age, Mike Oldfield, Judas Priest and many more. In a YouTube interview, *Primal* magazine asked him to explain the difference between a great photograph and an ordinary one. "A great photograph is not taken," he said. "It's given to you." I find it a fitting tribute that our Opeth feature was designed in mid May, two weeks before Hutson's death — yet there's his name in *GW* again. Our condolences to his family and friends.

GEARING UP: If it seems as though there's an extra gear review in this issue, that's because there is. The one-page review that disappeared in mid 2020 (when that pandemic thing showed up) is back — and it's pissed! To find it, point your fingers and/or eyeballs to page 82. Enjoy this issue!

— Damian Fanelli

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SOUNDING BOARD

Got something you want to say? **EMAIL US AT:** GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com

Kneelin' down before Neil Giraldo

I just wanted to say thanks for featuring Neil Giraldo in the July 2023 issue. I'm from the same town that "Spyder" is originally from (Parma, Ohio). I even went to the same high school, Parma Senior High School, although we were decades apart (I'm an '04 grad). I've always admired his technique and iconic solos. Growing up I thought, "If that dude can play guitar that well and make it big, maybe so can I." Our alma mater is going to be bulldozed in a few months, which sucks, but I really enjoyed reading about Neil's audition with Pat Benatar and the band's early years. Thanks again!

— Josh Gatka

When I'm asked who my favorite guitarists are, Neil Giraldo is often at the top of my list. I could probably list off the records he appears on or produced as well. Facility, speed, inventive, surprising, a pleasure to watch play. I'm glad to see him getting recognition in the guitar periodicals. Maybe you can prevail upon him to impart some lessons sometime.

— Jon C. Lundell

Loved that history of Aria

Thank you for the article on the history of Aria Guitars [*July 2023*]. Back in 1981, my guitar teacher talked me into buying a quality guitar. He mentioned that Neal Schon was playing one at the time. I didn't know anything about guitars but bought an Aria Pro II TS600. It has a neck-thru body with layers of maple and walnut, not to mention a great sound to go with all the special features. I've bought and sold many guitars over the years, but I'm really glad I kept this one. I'm a longtime subscriber and loved this history of Aria Guitars. Thanks to Joe Matera!

— nedscreed

More about George Lynch's pedalboard

I love George Lynch's music, but his pedalboards are a disorganized mess! It looks like amateur hour [*June 2023*]. I wish you'd list everything that's pictured... I don't know what that silver thing with all the sliders is on the lower right of his larger board. Looks like that's a J. Rockett Archer Ikon hiding there, but that could be some kind of clone... And there's a Mu-Tron something-or-other... Why would this be on the board if they "tend to stay at home"? And where's the Boss TU-3 tuner?!

I'd love to know if he checks his small board as luggage for fly-in dates. In a special ATA case? A run-of-the-mill SKB case? Any panicky times if it doesn't arrive? Any concerns traveling with an expensive Klon? Or does this go into carry-on? I love the My Pedalboard feature! Keep it up!

— JB, Cocoa, FL

[*Ed.'s note: The pedal with the sliders is a Chase Bliss Audio Automatone; the small gold pedal is a Way Huge Smalls Conspiracy Theory Professional Overdrive.*]

Is this Billy Gibbons' favorite power tool?

I was delighted to read the Power Tools article regarding the 1954-present Gibson Les Paul Junior [*July 2023*], as that's a model I'm not familiar with. It was Billy Gibbons' first guitar; he got it when he was 13. From what I understand, he still has it. Keep up the good work. I look forward to every issue!

— Mike Maly

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*

Robert Ibanez

AGE: 56
HOMETOWN: Houston (Space City), TX
GUITARS: 2012 Gibson Les Paul Trad Pro, PRS SE Custom 24, Charvel DK24/HH, 1983 Ibanez RoadStar II (RS315), 1976 Ibanez Les Paul (2351), 1973 Ibanez SG (2354)
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: ZZ Top "Just Got Paid," Joe Bonamassa "When the Fire Hits the Sea," Molly Hatchet "Dreams I'll Never See" and lots of Beatles

Chad Schepp

AGE: 47
HOMETOWN: Greendale, WI
GUITARS: Fender Telecaster, Fender Stratocaster, G&L Tele, Epiphone EJ-200
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Contemporary Christian music, Iron Maiden "Fear of the Dark," Jimi Hendrix "Hey Joe," Led Zeppelin "When the Levee Breaks"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Duesenberg Alliance Series Mike Campbell I, Fender American Professional II Jazzmaster

Mike Casey

AGE: 68
HOMETOWN: Greene, ME
GUITARS: Epiphone SG Special, Epiphone Les Paul Studio, Epiphone Firebird
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: The Eagles "Hotel California," Collective Soul "Shine," Mötley Crüe "Wild Side" and originals
GEAR I WANT MOST: Boss Katana 100, Fender Mustang 1, Dunlop Original Cry Baby

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READER ART

OF THE MONTH

If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue of *Guitar World*, email **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com** with a JPG or PDF of the image!

BRIAN MAY BY LILA DURHAM

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN BY CHRIS BUONCUORE

Russ Adkins

AGE: 56
HOMETOWN: Bangor, ME
GUITARS: '70s Les Paul Pro, '90s Fender Strat '57 Reissue (USA), Jackson SL1 USA, Fernandes refurb, Esteban midnight legacy refurb
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Led Zeppelin "Ten Years Gone," Black Sabbath "The Thrill of It All"
GEAR I WANT MOST: A Les Paul Standard given to me by Jimmy Page or Joe Walsh!

Steve Del

AGE: 35
HOMETOWN: Portland, CT
GUITARS: Suhr Modern, DC Custom, Gibson Flying V, Breedlove Acoustic
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Originals (Virtue N' Vices)
GEAR I WANT MOST: ENGL Retro 100

James Straley

AGE: 41
HOMETOWN: Manalapan, NJ
GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul, Fender Custom Shop Broadcaster, Fender American Acoustasonic Telecaster, Tom Anderson Crowdster, Emerald X-30
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: "Let It Go" (*Frozen* soundtrack), Rick Astley "Never Gonna Give You Up," Guns N' Roses "Patience"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender Jaguar Cobain Signature, Boss RC-600

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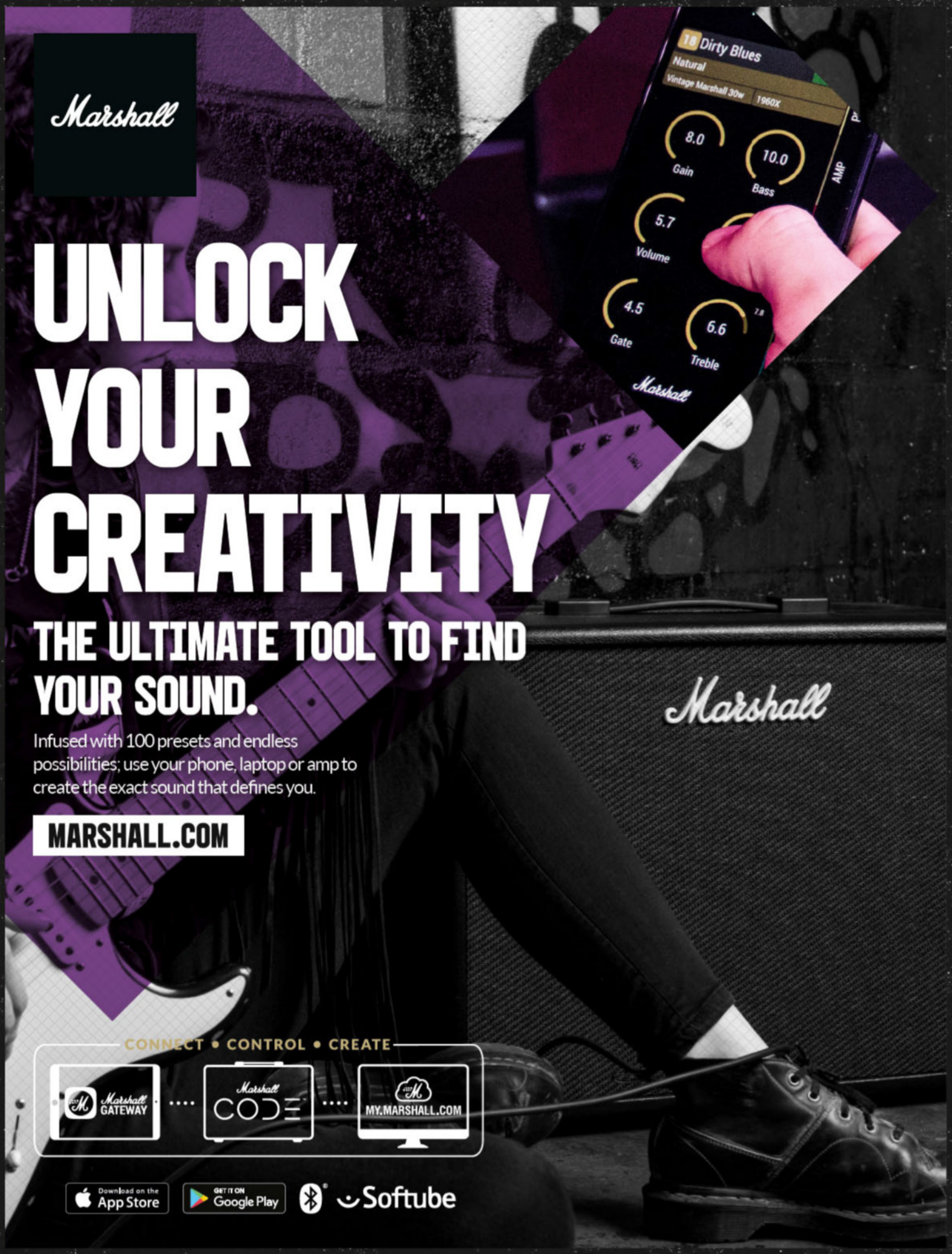
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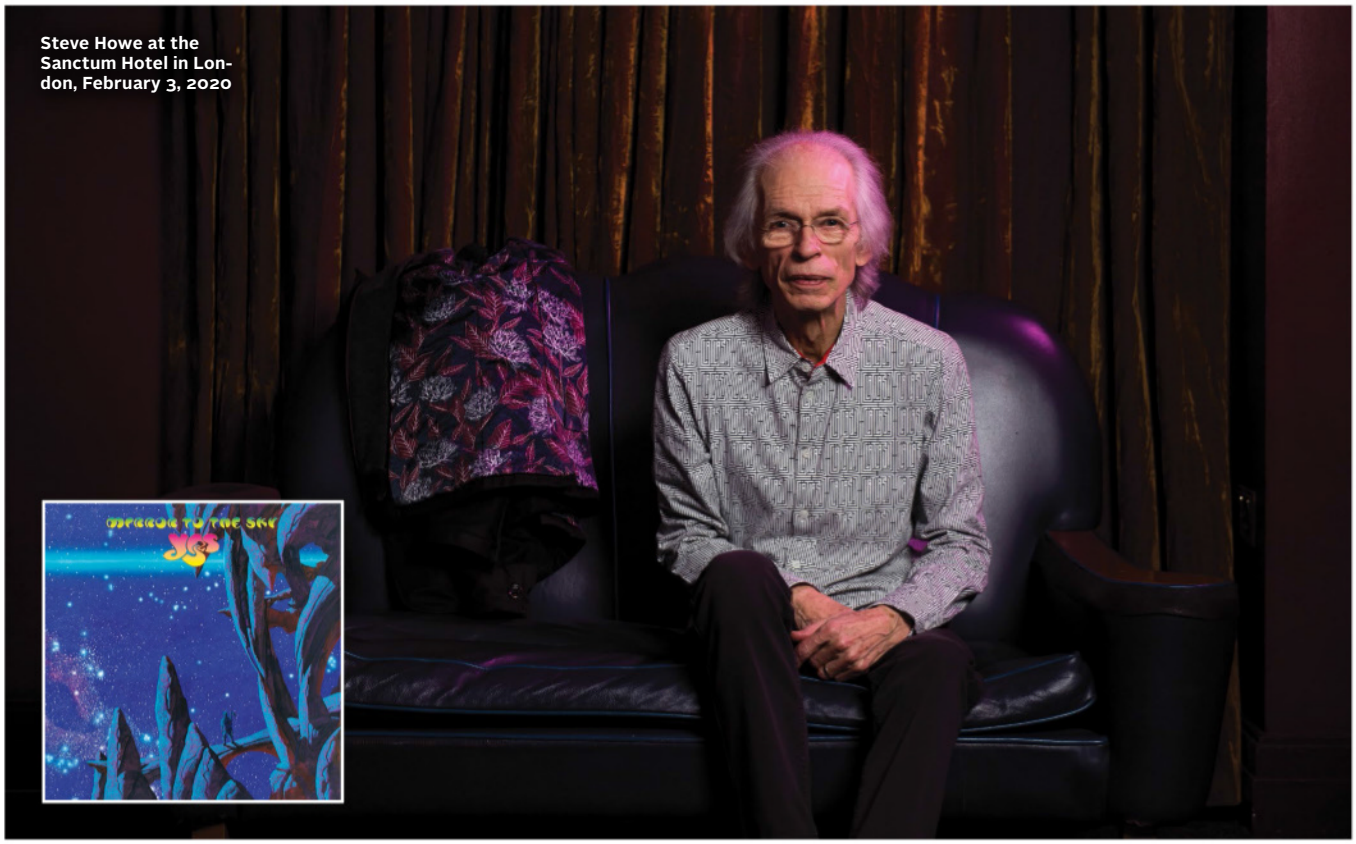


Steve Howe at the Sanctum Hotel in London, February 3, 2020

PHOTO BY WILL IRELAND

Giants Under the Sun

LIFELONG YES GUITARIST STEVE HOWE WEIGHS IN ON THE BAND'S NEW ALBUM AND HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE 1973'S *TALES FROM TOPOGRAPHIC OCEANS*

By Andrew Daly

BEGINNING IN 2011, veteran prog-rockers Yes have been on an incredible run. To some, *Fly from Here* (2011), *Heaven & Earth* (2014) and *The Quest* (2021) rival much of what the London-born band managed to accomplish during its Seventies heyday. Regardless of whether you agree with that bold assertion, it goes without saying that after years of lineup shuffling and early to mid-2000s inactivity, Yes is a band invigorated. Moreover, that late-career renaissance continues in the form of the group's latest long-player, *Mirror to the Sky*.

When asked about Yes' refusal to settle in as a legacy act, guitarist Steve Howe says, "We've been on a great run with these last few albums, and that's been a blessing. Of course, there are classic songs that we want to play and that we should play. But a throughline from the old material to the new carries us along. We've never been keen on leaning on what we've done; we're always tweaking things. We're always searching for any indicators of excitement or interest. So if we have an opportunity not to repeat ourselves on stage, we will take it."

Some 53 years since he first graced the stage with Yes, Howe is as vibrant as ever. Still following an ever-evolving creative muse, the unassuming virtuoso dialed in with *Guitar World* to discuss *Mirror the Sky* and more.

Is making a new Yes record at this stage formulaic for you?

Surprisingly, no. *Mirror the Sky* went a bit backward. We were almost done with the record, and our label was ready to release it. But then, I mentioned that we had further tracks at about 10 minutes each.

The label didn't even know we had them, but they were all for them once we played them for them. One of those songs was "Luminosity," which guided us stylistically. Working from that position sent us in a direction that dictated the entire album, which we feel in many ways is something that branched over from the last album, *The Quest*.

What's the secret to keeping from being repetitive?
It seems simple, but it's about picking the right songs. We write tons, so going with songs that have lyrics that will inspire us is imperative. It's about crafting each piece with unique colors and defining texture. And truthfully, that's what Yes has always done. We see our music as if it's all connected but still able to stand alone as individual pieces, you know? And I think that by avoiding any prog-rock cliches, we've been able to separate ourselves from the masses of King Crimson soundalikes.

How do you view your role within Yes?
Of course, the guitar is something I do quite regularly. [*Laughs*] So I'm a guitar player, but beyond that, I'm a songwriter. And the way that develops is that I'll put together some riffs, add some attitude to them and then try to decide if and where they might fit. I guess I view my role as someone who brings excitement to the music. Of course, there's my role as a producer, too. And that's tricky because I've got to ensure that my general overseeing doesn't interfere with my work as a guitarist. But it's a funny position because when I'm wearing the producer's hat, I might go hours or days without talking about guitar.

"We've been able to separate ourselves from the masses of King Crimson soundalikes"

Some excellent steel guitar work on *Mirror to the Sky*. How do you approach that?
I had a lot of fun with that, especially during "All Connected." The way that started was [*vocalist*] Jon Davidson had some ideas he was working on, and I found that within those, there was a ton of space for something interesting. From there, I decided the steel guitar would do nicely and began building a framework. With that, compared to some of the other songs, there was a bit of extra development regarding the arrangement. Instead of ending as normally, we looped back to the intro and then played the song out. And then, I improvised on the steel, so those structures were recorded separately.

***Tales from Topographic Oceans* will turn 50 this year. What's changed most for Yes in that time?**
Interesting question. It would be an understatement to say that our recording methods have changed. [*Laughs*] Back then, we'd record things on the road to cassettes and quarter-inch tape. And when we'd bring it to the studio later, we'd say, "God... this sounds awful. What are we going to do with this?" From there, we'd say, "How do we play and improve it?" So the entire demoing process was very rough. But that process also bred albums like *Fragile, Close to the Edge* and *Tales from Topographic Oceans*. I think that had we not done that; perhaps we might not have distinguished ourselves from the Pink Floyds of the world.

Do you still view the guitar as your ultimate means of expression?
I think so. But part of the challenge is balancing that with creating music for a world with a shorter attention span than ever before. Then again, things are different now. Back in the Seventies, we toured like mad and didn't always have success. And then, with Asia, I was part of a massive record that sold 4 million copies. I couldn't believe that it could be so seemingly effortless. So, I've seen both sides, and now, I'm more driven by what music means to me than anything else. I've often said I'd rather be a Chet Atkins back-room guy. I'd be quite happy with that. But certainly I'm an opportunist, too. So, if the spotlight keeps falling on me, I'll have to rise to the occasion.

INTRODUCING

The Hi-End
Nothing to Hide (Rum Bar Records)
SOUND Boston-based rambunctious rock 'n' roll with a tip of the hat to the Stones and Humble Pie, albeit with seriously ramped-up intensity. Bruno Giordano's guitar lines snarl and spit out economical, Angus-worthy homages to the guitar heroes of the classic rock age. An album's worth of potential hit singles in a parallel, cooler universe.
KEY TRACK "Can I Get a Witness"

DieHumane
The Grotesque (WURMgroup)
SOUND When a band is made up of former members of Exodus, Life of Agony and Type O Negative, you know you're in for a set of slamming, uncompromising metal. All present and correct here, but cut through with unlikely elements of R&B and jazz, to confound listeners' expectations. Joshua Vargas and Greg Hilligiest's guitars ooze venomous bad intent.
KEY TRACK "Oblivion"

Hurricane #1
Backstage Waiting to Go On (Golden Robot)
SOUND Hailing from the U.K. with a sound that mixes elements of the Jam and the Who, with the hard drive of AC/DC. It's an unlikely combo on paper, but one that works fantastically well to deliver an album's worth of grinding riffery, welded to thrilling vocal harmonies and impeccable pop melodies.
KEY TRACK "Tonight"
— Mark McStea

KELLY DAVIDSON (HI-END) ANTHEM IN ART PHOTOGRAPHY (DIE) PROVIDED/PR (#1)

Kat Dyson onstage in Verona, Italy, April 25, 2022

INQUIRER
KAT DYSON

CATCHING UP WITH THE PRINCE AND CYNDI LAUPER VETERAN

Q: What was your first guitar?
It was an acoustic guitar from Sears that my mom bought me when I was nine. I forget what brand it was. Later, when I started playing in bands when I was 13, the manager of the band bought me a 1969 Telecaster Thinline from some pawn shop or something.

Q: What was the first song you learned on the guitar?
"As Tears Go By" by Marianne Faithful.

Q: The building is burning down; what one guitar from your collection would you save?
That's like asking a woman what pair of shoes her favorites are! That's not a fair question for a woman because it depends on what I need to do, where I'm going and what's happening. I feel like, well, I've got two arms and a hand, so I can save three guitars! And they'd be my 1969 Fender Telecaster Thinline, a PRS Custom 24 Santana model and a beautiful Epiphone Crestwood I just got.

Q: When was the last time you practiced and what did you play?
When I'm in tour mode, I practice before every show. I always run through the show transitions and do a bit of warmup, play a bit of the solos and a bit of the songs in sequence. When I'm home it's different, but I'll try to put my hands on my guitar every day.

Q: What aspect of the guitar would you like to be better at?
There are so many techniques and so many guys out there doing so many technical things. But I'm always looking to add to dexterity and to add to my harmonic vocabulary and chordal vocabulary, even though the tour or the job I am on, may or may not require it. I'm listening to many new guitar players too as I'm always looking to expand chordally and harmonically.

"I can't be a better Paul McCartney; I can't be a better you. I can only be a better me"

Q: What advice would you give to your younger self about the guitar if you had a chance to?
Don't let the boys bully you around so much. At the time when I was young in Virginia, I didn't really see a lot of girls playing guitar, so I guess I'd also tell myself that there are more girls out there playing and that I *will* meet them, because I did eventually meet a lot of good female players, so I wasn't as alone as I thought I was.

Q: Do you find it difficult being a female musician in a male-dominated industry?
I have four brothers in my family, so I'm used to the male dynamic. I always at least try to navigate in a playing situation as if I'm with my brothers and we're playing sports. I just approach it from that angle and for me, it's been fine. The industry is competitive, but because my dad was an army man, we didn't really grow up with a competitive spirit. We grew up knowing this is your team, this is your platoon and don't fight against the people that you're on the front lines with. My father also liked to say, "If you're paying attention to you and you're getting where you need to go, you don't have time to be jealous or look at anybody else's situation." You're always going to learn from each other. And you're an individual, there's no photocopies of you, so I can only be a better me. Somebody else can't be a better me. I can't be a better Paul McCartney; I can't be a better you. I can only be a better me.

— Joe Matera

ROBERTO FINIZIO/GETTY IMAGES

"Classical guitar is often kind of about emulating other people, especially older generations of classical musicians," Marcin says

KLAUDIA KUREK

Marcin

MEET AN ACOUSTIC MASTER WHO PROBABLY BURNS ABOUT 1,500 CALORIES WITH EACH PERFORMANCE OF BACH'S TOCCATA

By Adam Kovac

IT'S BEEN A wild few years for Marcin Patrzalek. The Polish guitarist, who goes by just his first name on his myriad popular social media accounts, has risen to become the Big Thing in classical guitar, enjoying crossover success virtually unparalleled in that world, culminating with his recent acquisition of the biggest symbol of having "made it": his very own signature guitar.

The floppy-haired guitarist rose to fame through videos of his flamboyant and percussive acoustic guitar techniques: he strums, picks, taps and slaps all while treating his instrument just as much as a drum set as a guitar. It's an approach that has well-positioned Marcin in the current music industry zeitgeist, where visual panache is as important, if not more so, than the actual music. (Case in point: Marcin has just under 82,000 monthly Spotify listeners but has almost 10 times that many YouTube subscribers and more than 1 million followers on Instagram). It's particularly impressive given the traditionalist mindset that can dominate much of the classical music world.

"Classical guitar is often kind of about emulating other people, especially older generations of classical musicians," he said. "So I just wanted to do the wildest thing possible, and that culminated in this style, which just happened to be very visually stimulating."

Marcin has had ample opportunity to bring that style to wider audiences; for two years in a row, he's been included in Jared Dines' annual holiday-season shred collaboration, tearing his acoustic up alongside electric titans such as Matt Heafy, Jason Richardson and Herman Li. He's also had a recent high-profile team up with mercurial YouTuber Ichika Nito. The sheer eclecticism of who he's played with is illustrative of how healthy the guitar universe is right now, he says. Because guitar music is no longer the dominant force in pop, players have "gravitated toward more eclectic and idiosyncratic ways to play. Because if you don't do that, there's no place for you."

For his own out-there style, Marcin has finally found the perfect tool: the Ibanez MRC10 features a deep cutaway to better reach all 20 frets, built-in Fishman preamp and, perhaps most important, a reinforced wood plate designed to enhance Marcin's distinctive percussive body tapping technique.

"I just wanted to do the wildest thing possible, and that culminated in this style, which just happened to be very visually stimulating"

"It's a guitar where when you put the strap around yourself, you can run around the stage with it, you can jump around with it," he says. "You can do anything you want with that guitar."

Adrian Vandenberg performs in Belgium, August 12, 2022

Adrian Vandenberg

SUFFERING FROM RIFF-WRITER'S BLOCK? TAKE A PAGE FROM THE FORMER WHITESNAKE GUITARIST'S BOOK AND HOP ON A BIKE

By Joe Bosso

GOT A PROBLEM writing riffs? Adrian Vandenberg has some sage advice for you: go bike riding. "Whenever I play the guitar at home, I tend to noodle around and nothing comes from it," he says. "But something different happens when I'm on my bicycle. I'll cruise through the woods, and before you know it I've got these incredible riff ideas in my head. I'll pull over, sing them into my phone, and then I'll keep going. It's pretty cool."

Perhaps best known to music fans for his stretch in Whitesnake in the late Eighties, Vandenberg kicked around with various projects before forming Vandenberg's MoonKings in 2013. When that band's singer was unable to commit to extensive touring, Vandenberg decided to form a new band with his surname moniker — returning to the original group name he used back in 1981. "In many ways, I never really felt as if Vandenberg the band was finished. It just took me a while to come back to it." he says.

The new Vandenberg lineup (which includes singer Mats Levén, drummer Koen Herfst and bassist Randy van der Elsen) issued its debut album, *2020*, three years ago (natch), and now they're back with *Sin*, a robust collection of fiery, epic hard rockers that afford the Dutch guitarist plenty of room to explore what he calls "the emotional side" to his playing.

"There are so many great guitarists nowadays, and I ask myself, 'What can I add to what's being done?'" he says. "And then I realize I don't need to add anything because I play out of passion. I don't need to prove myself to anybody. On this album, I decided to focus on tone and expression. I wanted to create moods, which to me is far more meaningful than a lot of notes."

The Covid lockdowns that shut down the touring industry from 2020 and into 2022 kept Vandenberg and his namesake band mostly off the road. Following the release of *Sin*, he happily reports that a full tour is in the works. "I don't know how many times I've said 'I can't wait' over the last three years," he says. "Finally, we can get out there and have no traffic lights stopping us."

"I wanted to create moods, which to me is far more meaningful than a lot of notes"

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** 1980 Gibson Les Paul Heritage Standard, Peavey Vandenberg signature model
- **AMPS** Marshall JCM800, Bogner Ecstasy, Mesa Boogie
- **EFFECTS** An occasional Carl Martin pedal, but mostly straight into the amp

ELSIE ROYMANS/GETTY IMAGES

RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS (1976) BOBBY BANK/GETTY IMAGES (2018)

Dusting Off Angel

ANGEL GUITARIST PUNKY MEADOWS TALKS GEAR, NEW MUSIC AND THE GLAM TITANS' SURPRISE SECOND ACT

By Andrew Daly

WITH THE WORLD devolving into a sweltering casserole of low attention spans and ever-fickle attitudes for what some call "legacy acts," it's becoming harder and harder to create, let alone support, new music. But that's no matter to Seventies glam titans Angel.

Since their triumphant return to the studio, 2019's *Risen*, the group has done its part to carry the torch and keep it burning bright. And so, when the news came that Angel were at work again, their fanbase was excited. If the early returns are any indication, Angel's latest offering, *Once Upon a Time*, is yet another glimmering affair, laced with slick solos, soaring vocals and cohesive instrumentation.

Still, the pitfalls of the modern era remain. When asked if those issues weigh on him, guitarist Punky Meadows says, "Angel fans are fierce. They're so loyal. Everybody knows records are hard to sell nowadays. But look, I'm a guitar player; I've never worried about what's popular. But our record company was worried about having so many songs. They said, 'Punky, why don't you lose some of these songs?' I said, 'I can't do that. I might be dead next year. It's all got to come out now.' We decided to keep all the songs and make it an experience. We can't worry about selling CDs. All we can do is make a good record and hope the fans are into it as much as we are."

As he prepares to hit the road, Punky Meadows had a chat with *Guitar World* to recount the origins of *Once Upon a Time*, dig into his gear and offer his musings on Angel's second act.

What can you tell me about Angel's new record, *Once Upon a Time*?

We were promoting the last record, *Risen*, and then Covid hit, so I told Danny [*Farrow*] and Frank [*DiMino*], "Hey, maybe we should write another album." I figured we might as well make the most of the time while sitting there and doing nothing. So we talked to Cleopatra, our label, and they were happy to give us another deal. From there, Danny and I started writing right away, and I'm pretty prolific; I'm always writing. I sit on my couch playing my guitar and watch TV every night, but nobody can watch TV with me because I play the whole time. [*Laughs*]

What sets this record apart from past albums?

What I love about Angel is the diversity. I never want to repeatedly give the fans the same record like many bands do. I like diversification. I came up playing in bar bands, and I had to play Motown, dance

[*left, from left*] Angel's Punky Meadows, Frank Dimino and Mickie Jones on stage in NYC circa 1976

Meadows at the New Jersey Kiss Expo, Parsippany, New Jersey, December 8, 2018

music, British Invasion and blues. I love playing all of it; I love to play with octaves and stuff. I'm a blues player; that's where I cut my teeth. I think I've added some of that into the sauce here. Angel was never a one-trick pony; we covered glam, prog, power pop and rock. I love melody, so if it's got that, I'm happy.

Do you have a favorite track on *Once Upon a Time*?

This album has all the things Angel fans expect, but it's also got some deep lyrical songs. If I had to key in on one, I'd go with "Once Upon a Time an Angel and a Devil Fell in Love (and It Did Not End Well)." It's an age-old story about not dancing with the Devil... And I was wondering if people will be offended by that, or if they'll love it and get it.

You've got a song about an angel coming down who's looking for love, and she meets the Devil, and they get together. She helps heal him, but in the end, he kills her by stabbing her in the back, and before she dies, she says, "Why did you kill me?" And he says, "What did you expect? You knew I was the Devil all along."

I'm proud of that song because it's a cautionary tale. We said a lot in a five-minute piece, and it's very memorable.

"I was shocked when I first came on Facebook years back because I learned I had influenced many big guitar players"

What's your approach to soloing?

I pretty much just wing it. [*Laughs*] I'll play a couple of passes, and I'll run with it if there's something there. If not, I'll keep working on it. Sometimes you get it on the first pass; other times, it's more of a struggle. I'll hit one note and hang on it for a while and stay away from distortion. I try to pick clean and fast, maybe adding some hybrid picking here and there. Tone is big for me, and as far as that goes, I believe that comes from your fingers. People tell me they can pick my tone out in a second, which is gratifying.

What gear are you using?

I've been playing my Strat forever. Well, it's not a true Fender Strat; I built it. The body is Fender and the rest is Carvin. It's got a Carvin neck, Carvin guts and a Sophia tremolo, which I believe is the best tremolo on the market. If you do double-stop bends, your strings will usually go flat, but the Sophia keeps things from going flat when you hit the whammy bar. Other than that, I'm a purist. I don't have that many pedals besides my old [*Ibanez*] Tube Screamer and a [*J.Rockett Audio*] Rockaway [*Archer overdrive/EQ*] with a nice six-band EQ. Beyond those, I use a chorus, a little echo and maybe a bit of reverb here and there. But I mostly keep it simple and rely on my guitar and a good amp.

Given its historical status as a hard-luck band, describe the meaning of Angel's second act.

It means all the world to me. I walked away from music in 1988, went into business for myself, entered the stock market and did well. But I never stopped playing guitar and writing songs; I always wanted to play. But the music business left me with such a bad taste in my mouth, so when I quit, I was so relieved that I didn't think I'd ever go back. I was doing my own thing, and honestly, if I hadn't met Danny and then hooked up with Frank again, I don't think I would've returned.

But now, it's exciting to be back because I love playing guitar in a live setting. For me, playing guitar is not something I want to do; it's something I need to do. I look forward to it; it's like sitting down with an old friend. We talk together about shit, and it makes me feel good. And even when I'm not playing anything, I'm always noodling. I still love it. It never left me. Music and the guitar are a part of who I am.

Given your distrust for the industry, to what does Angel owe their longevity?

I think it's because we love what we're doing. A lot of times, you see bands come back, and they're shadows of themselves. Many older bands go through the motions, but that's not the case with Angel. When we hit the stage, we mean it. We don't rely on what we've done; we focus on improving. It's not always easy; being on the road is hard; eating and sleeping aren't always good. But once you hit the stage and the fans are there, you give it your all.

I was shocked when I first came on Facebook years back because I learned I had influenced many big guitar players. Guys like Andy Timmons told me my playing is a part of his musical DNA. Marty Friedman and Paul Gilbert told me the same thing. These are such monster players, and all I can say is that I'm honored. I am honored to continue doing this for myself and the fans.

Dirty Honey's John Notto in action in Charlotte, North Carolina, September 10, 2021

JEFF HAHNE/GETTY IMAGES (NOTTO)

MY PEDALBOARD

JOHN NOTTO

WHAT DIRTY HONEY'S MARSHALL-DIMING SIX-STRINGER SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Andrew Daly

"I DON'T RELY on overdrives, especially since I'm a Marshall plexi user. Most of my pedalboard is filled with effects that I hope the listener can distinctly hear and identify. I like transparent-sounding overdrives but tend to steer clear of compression pedals. But my concept is ever-changing. It might be the ADHD — or I just haven't found the golden tone yet!

"I start with my tuner, a TC Electronic PolyTune 2 Noir. From there, I go into a SoloDallas Schaffer Replica TSR. It's kind of like an overdrive but more of a treble boost. That goes into my wah, the Dunlop GCB95 Cry Baby Standard. Next is the MXR Tap Tempo; I have a great relationship with MXR, and they sent that over to me while I was on tour because I needed something small to save board space.

"After that, there's my Fulltone Octafuzz, which leads us to the Electro-Harmonix Nano POG. That's a polyphonic octave pedal, and I love it. After that, I have a newer addition, an MXR Six Band EQ. These next three pedals are in a loop: my MXR Uni-Vibe, a chorus/vibrato pedal; the Dunlop EP103 Echoplex Delay; and my MXR Reverb.

"While I love my MXR stuff and respect the new boutique pedal makers, I'd love to have all vintage stuff. That's the stuff you stay with forever. There's just something different about using an original version of a legendary pedal. I can't afford it now, but that's the goal."

JOHN NOTTO (BOARD)

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE PEDAL FOR A FULL SHOW:

"I think it'd be the SoloDallas TSR. It's perfect for solos and my rhythm playing. It's the perfect boost, and it doesn't change the fundamental tone of my Marshalls. It makes them hotter, and they sizzle just a little bit more. Not only could I do an entire Dirty Honey show with that pedal, but I could easily do life with that pedal."

Wanna see someone's pedalboard? Let us know! Write to GWsoundingBoard@futurenet.com.

Teke::Teke's Hidetaka Yoneyama [*left*] and Sei Nakauchi Pelletier

Teke::Teke

FINALLY, A BAND THAT BLENDS CLASSIC JAPANESE BALLADRY, SURF ROCK AND PSYCHEDELIA

By Gregory Adams

Pelletier and co-guitarist Hidetaka Yoneyama ride a rip-tide of rotating wahs, ring mods and antique overdrives

WHEN MONTREAL'S TEKE::TEKE first formed to cover the music of Japanese surf guitar icon Takeshi Terauchi, bandleader Sei Nakauchi Pelletier aimed to capture the explosive, tube-carving essence of his hero's playing, rather than recreate his gear haul. Nevertheless, when Pelletier recently found an old Mosrite online — the late Terry's brand of choice — he knew he had to grab it. Trouble is, his new toy hardly gets as much play as the worn-in Univox Hi-Flier he's been hauling around since Teke::Teke's early days.

"I always go back to the Hi-Flier. I feel like it's just the sound of Teke::Teke," Pelletier says, citing the vintage offset's high-set whammy bar and grittier presence as reasons for making it his go-to. "It's almost too slick, the Mosrite — too hi-fi, somehow. I feel like I have to be delicate."

On *Hagata*, Teke::Teke's second album of originals, the septet crash surf-informed phosphorescence through elements of doom-laden psych-rock and the hon-eyed bass bump of early Seventies Serge Gainsbourg. Throughout, Pelletier and co-guitarist Hidetaka Yoneyama ride a rip-tide of rotating wahs, ring mods and antique overdrives. Live, Yoneyama is also prone to producing teal-textured waves of guitar feedback with the use of portable fans and needle nose pliers. While historically the more ambient player, raw power *Hagata* highlight "Hoppe" has Yoneyama going for broke with feverishly abstract, off-meter scale-crawling.

"It used to be more that Hidetaka would do more of the rhythm guitar, and I would do most of the leads," Pelletier says of the dynamic, "but by the end of 'Hoppe,' I'm doing the down-strumming, punk-ish guitar [*while*] Hide is doing the crazy, weird stuff overtop of it."

That role-swap is just part of why Pelletier considers *Hagata* a more "fluidy" album than the band's 2021 debut, *Shirushi*. Take how instruments often subvert their origins: vocals are undulated through after-effects; trombones are pipelined through rusted-out [*Pro Co*] Rat pedal distortion. And in an explicit nod to Terauchi's playing, the boisterous, roiling "Garakuta" finds Pelletier playing close to his Hi-Flier's bridge to yield a percussively twangy timbre more akin to traditional Japanese stringed instruments like the Shamisen or the Koto.

While Pelletier took on a conductor/composer role for *Shirushi*, the full band fleshed out and evolved *Hagata*'s arrangements in the studio — those in-flux conditions often meaning the septet were too caught up in the moment to marvel at what's become their boldest psych-surf statement yet. "We had a lot of adrenaline coming out of [*us*]," Yoneyama says. "Sometimes we didn't remember what we did until the day after; as we were listening back, [*it was like*], 'Oh, that's so magical!' A lot of magic happened in the studio."

ANA DEMAKES

5 FIVE QUESTIONS

JAKUB ŻYTECKI

NEW INSPIRATIONS, TWO-MINUTE SOLOS AND WHY RIGHT NOW IS A PARTICULARLY INTERESTING TIME FOR THE GUITAR

By Ellie Rogers

POLISH GUITAR VIRTUOSO, multi-instrumentalist and producer Jakub Żytecki has solidified his position as a trailblazer in progressive guitar music with a brilliant new album, *Remind Me*. The shred-meets-ambient specialist also teases an eight-string signature model and reveals why it's time to rip it up like his teen hero once more.

Q: What's the one guitar you couldn't live without?

It's probably the one I recorded most of the album with — the Mayones they built for me. It's an offset model, a bit different from their catalog. It's inspired by the Fender Jaguar, so it's got this Kurt Cobain-ish shape. I actually received that guitar as an eight-string version recently. I haven't shown anybody, but it's something we're working on, and there's going to be the signature coming this year.

Q: Do your tones come solely from plugins or do you also use pedals?

I got some pedals thinking it was going to change my process, but still I'm ending up recording super dry and changing it in the post process. It was on my first record that I started using Neural DSP stuff because they're awesome, probably the best in the market. I've been using a Valhalla reverb for years — it's everywhere — and I use [*Soundtoys*] EchoBoy when it comes to delays.

Q: How would you describe your approach to the guitar?

It's probably a bit clichéd to say, but it's just a tool to tell some kind of story. You're a part of a bigger picture. Obviously there are places to have the guitar in the spotlight, but there are also moments where it's just supporting other things. Usually, it's about recreating a certain feeling. I see music through the general emotional idea it carries. Let's say I have a chord; I try to think of why I like this chord and what kind of emotion it gives me. The more I understand it, the better I portray the emotion.

> "Let's say I have a chord; I try to think of why I like this chord and what kind of emotion it gives me"

Q: You've been quoted in the past as saying you don't listen to guitar music. Where does your inspiration come from?

I think that was maybe two years back — maybe from the previous record — and I was feeling like that for many years. The last time I was listening to guitar music was as a teenager obsessed with Dream Theater. Right now, it feels like it came back to me a little bit. With the thing that Polyphia and Plini are doing, I feel like it's an interesting moment for the guitar. I feel inspired by it again.

Q: Is there a performance on the record that you're especially proud of?

This is the first time I actually came back to the classic conception of guitar solos. There are at least two solos that I wouldn't have done three years ago — typical high-gain, two-minute-long solos. There's one in "Moonghost alt" that is kind of like a John Petrucci-style solo with a wah at the end. You can't get more classic than that, and I like it because I haven't done that in years!

PROVIDED/PR

QUOTABLE

Q: JOHN PRIMER ON JOINING MUDDY WATERS' BAND

"Being sideman to Willie Dixon in late '79 helped a lot, but being with Muddy was a whole different thing. I had only been in Willie's band for maybe six months, and we were playing in Mexico City, and that's where Muddy heard me play, which would be around 1980. After that show, **Muddy asked Willie about me and said, 'My whole band just quit. Who was that young man you've got playing up there with you?'** Willie said, 'Ah, that's John Primer. He's pretty good, he can play a thing or two.'

"I guess Muddy must have liked what he heard 'cause he said to Willie, 'Well, that man sure knows my music. I'd like to have him in my band.' Willie gave Muddy his blessing, and not too long after, Muddy asked me to be in his band.

"I didn't even think about it — I said, 'Sure, I'm in. Tell me where and when,' and we jumped right on tour. I was blown away, and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life to play with my number one influence. Muddy never messed around — there were no funny changes, it was all business, and I loved every minute of it."

Q: PAUL GILBERT: 12 GUITARISTS WHO SHAPED MY SOUND

1. Jimmy Page
2. Frank Marino
3. Eddie Van Halen
4. Jimi Kidd
5/6. Pat Travers/Pat Thrall

"I'm actually going to squeeze two in here because both Pat Travers and Pat Thrall were huge influences. **The [*Pat Travers Band's*] *Crash and Burn* was influential on me in terms of starting to figure out what the blues were."**

7. Alex Lifeson
8. Yngwie Malmsteen
9. Robin Trower
10. B.B. King
11. Tony Iommi
12. Jimi Hendrix

— Andrew Daly

From GuitarWorld.com

FROM THE GW ARCHIVES

Lee Ranaldo on tunings and the fate of Sonic Youth

"There are too many tunings. Going out live, I need to bring a whole bunch of guitars, so it's kind of back in the same situation as Sonic Youth — lugging around five or six guitars to do 10 songs. But it's just part of the way I work at this point... They're all brand-new tunings on this album [*2012's* Between the Times and the Tides]; none of them are from the Sonic Youth period... I've got new songs being developed now that use all those tunings. There's one song on the album in standard tuning, "Fire Island," which is probably the first song I've put out — that wasn't a cover — in standard tuning since the first Sonic Youth album, that blue one back in '82" [Sonic Youth].

Given Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon's marital situation, what's the status of Sonic Youth?

"We're on hiatus. Obviously, Thurston and Kim have personal problems to work out. I really couldn't tell you what the future holds. We're working on archival projects that've been ongoing for a bunch of years, digitizing our tape archive, looking for material to release, and we've got a couple of potential releases in the pipeline, so that's all continuing."

— Damian Fanelli

From GuitarWorld.com, April 14, 2012

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

NIELS VAN IPEREN/GETTY IMAGES (NOEL) RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS (FOGHAT) JOSH SISK/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES (RANALDO)

What's the last time you saw a photo of Foghat's **Dave Peverett** (1943-2000) [*left*] and **Rod "The Bottle" Price** (1947-2005) in a guitar magazine? Price — whose nickname should evoke Robert Johnson and Duane Allman instead of Foster Brooks and Dean Martin — was a bona-fide slide guitar master and a big fan of open-E tuning. Check out his playing on Foghat's "Drivin' Wheel," "Stone Blue" and, of course, "Slow Ride" (especially the revved-up version from 1977's *Live*). For our latest Foghat transcription, be sure to backpedal to "I Just Want to Make Love to You" in the Holiday 2022 issue. — *DF*

IS THIS THE SONG MOST AMERICANS WANT TO LEARN HOW TO PLAY ON GUITAR?

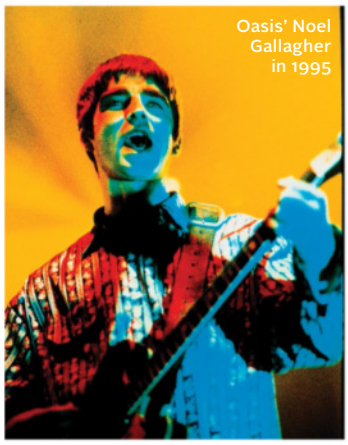
UkuleleWorld.com (in no way affiliated with *Guitar World*), gathered average monthly searches for lessons on 1,000 popular tracks across piano, ukulele, guitar and violin to identify the top choices for American players.

Narrowing the supplied data down to just the guitar category shows that the most popular choice for guitarists alone is Oasis' ballad "Wonderwall," which receives a reported 15,620 average monthly searches.

This is closely followed by Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama," on an average of 14,705 searches per month. Neither of these two tracks is a particularly surprising inclusion.

A big caveat comes in that the data has some sizeable gaps once you narrow it down to a per-instrument basis. The final list is drawn from the cumulative totals across all the surveyed instruments, which creates a very different top 25 than you would expect from a list based on a single instrument.

For instance, Vance Joy's "Riptide" is the third most popular guitar track featured on the final 25, with 11,519 searches — a pretty surprising ranking. However, the reason it is in the 25 initially is likely due to the heavy weighting of ukulele searches it receives — a monthly average of 32,085.



Given that in 2021 there were about twice as many guitars sold as ukuleles (3.4 million, compared to 1.7 million, according to Statista) it seems odd that the top guitar tutorial searches should perform comparatively poorly in this list. All of which is to say, we'd recommend you take any guitar-specific information here with a heavy pinch of salt. — *Matt Parker*

"I WAS JADED, BUT THEN I FELL **BACK IN LOVE WITH THE ART OF SOLOING**"

Sevendust's Clint Lowery [*left*] and John Connolly

STRETCHING THE TRUTH

GW 27

ON *TRUTH KILLER*, SEVENDUST'S MENACING (AND GUITAR-PACKED) NEW ALBUM, **CLINT LOWERY** AND **JOHN CONNOLLY** PONDER THE MUSICAL QUESTION, "HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?"

BY **GREGORY ADAMS** PHOTOS BY **CHUCK BRUECKMANN**

SEVENDUST rhythm guitarist John Connolly was loving the sound of the band's *Truth Killer* album as they were tracking it in Florida last summer. It's easy to understand why; the veteran Atlanta hard rockers' 14th full-length consistently brings the boom through a series of chunked-out, darkly detuned progressions. But the guitarist also recalls one particular moment — a couple of days after he'd locked in a bombastic, inverted bend motif for the record's "Love and Hate" — where things got a little weird. As bassist Vince Hornsby began laying down the low end for producer Michael "Elvis" Baskette, a bewildered Connolly noticed the piece had accidentally devolved into a tonal nightmare.

"I walked in and was like, 'Why does this sound...off?,'" Connolly tells *Guitar World*. "They couldn't get the bend; something about being down that low just wasn't connecting. So I played the riff on my guitar, and they were like 'Ohhhhhh!' The bass was just [*tuned*] a half-step off, but I was having an aneurysm listening to it."

"The menacing sound of that bend is such a big Sevendust thing to me," lead guitarist Clint Lowery says of "Love and Hate," though he reveals that the song had been on the chopping block before the group perfected its powerfully percussive edge — and pitch. "It's got this really simple, Alice in Chains, chromatic, one-fret [*descension*]. That *Jaws* kind of energy goes a long way."

This is all to say that, more than 25 years after releasing their gold-selling self-titled debut, Sevendust's music still has plenty of bite. You can credit much of that success to the way the group's original lineup has kept simpatico all these years, outside of Lowery's four-year sabbatical in the mid-aughts. Both guitarists note that maintaining their friendship with Hornsby, vocalist Lajon Witherspoon and drummer Morgan Rose is much more important to them than the music, but sick riffs can't hurt the bond, either. And with *Truth Killer*, Lowery and Connolly get extra low through the use of various baritones, seven-strings, multi-scales and more. "We usually go with the instruments that fight us the least," Connolly notes of the sessions' rotating arsenal, adding "When you're going down that low, you sort of go with the flow."

As with the gear haul, *Truth Killer* similarly explores a wide range of woofer-rumbling tunings, Sevendust plunging all the way down to a drop F♯ for the inkily incandescent "Sick Mouth." Lowery says that song's cavernous groove arose through some collaborative work he was doing with murky alt-metal unit Cane Hill, before ultimately surfacing on *Truth Killer*.

"I was trying to impress [*Cane Hill*]," he says. "They play crazy low; I don't even know the lowest tone, but it was almost comical. I was trying to meet them halfway, as that was as low as I could get on my guitar at home. But right after I sent that to them, they were like, 'This is a great song for Sevendust!' I was like, 'You're right! Let me just keep this.'"

Lowery [*left*] with his signature PRS SE and Connolly with his Dean Custom Shop Thorobred

Truth Killer follows 2020's *Blood & Stone*, a record Sevendust finished just before the start of the pandemic. Like many, Lowery and Connolly wrote their way through lockdowns. Lowery experimented with electro-organic textures for a pair of solo EPs, while Connolly and Hornsby made another record with their side-hustle, Projected. Through all that, they also accumulated a clutch of especially heavy ideas for Sevendust. Following pre-production at their respective homes, the songwriters met up with the rest of the group at Witherspoon's farmhouse in early 2022 to rehearse new tunes. Though they only spent a few days on the singer's farm — both guitarists reiterate that while the act tracked a few basic ideas onto their laptops, Witherspoon's spot doesn't sport a pro studio setup; Rose bashed out preliminary beats on an electronic drum kit — the rural Georgian locale rekindled the quintet's connection. Quite quickly, their focused-but-informal jams tapped into the spirit of early Sevendust. "The farmhouse was an opportunity for us to get together in the same room and get that energy, the way that we started our band," Lowery says, adding of their connection, "There's something special about when we're all together."

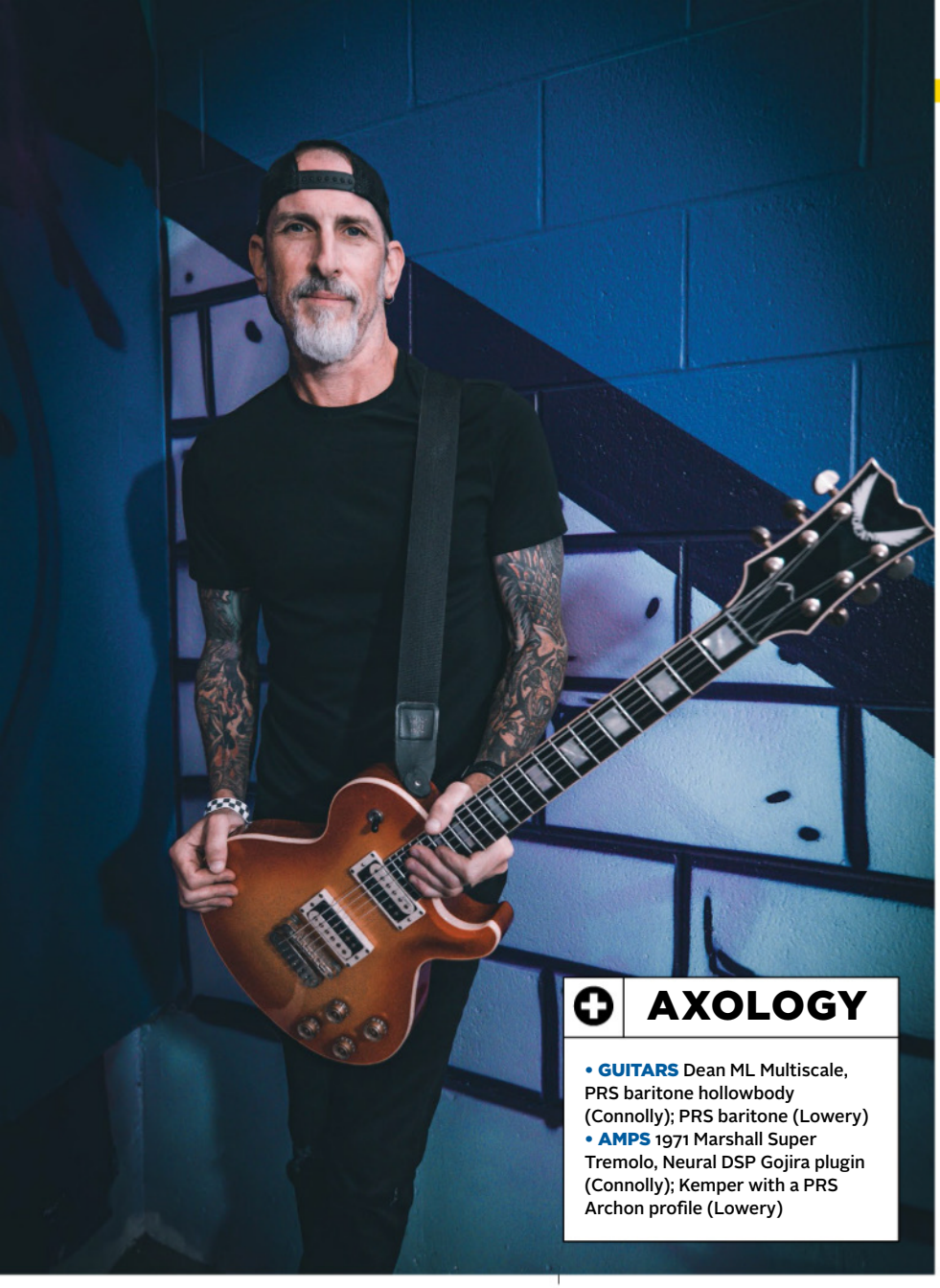
The song that really scorched it up in the farmhouse was *Truth Killer*'s first single, "Fence." While the album is full of foundation-cracking bounces, "Fence" is Sevendust at their most manic, the Connolly-penned piece ramping up *Truth Killer*'s bpms through mutated, metal-plated boogie-woogie riffs. "There's that tipping point where we know we're doing something slightly out of our comfort zone, but the second we drop back in the verse, it's just classic Sevendust," the guitarist says with respect to the greasy, rock 'n' roll swing of the intro. As the guitarist suggests, though, the verse's furiously syncopated, djent-jolted pace caps locks the band into an unmistakable groove, above which Witherspoon bellows out a proper m.o. for the returning Sevendust: "Time to light the fuse." When it came to how Lowery accentuated the piece, in particular, that meant feverishly multi-tracking layers of octaver-riddled scale work, skull-boring tremolo ambiance, and explosive tapping.

"That's the beauty of having two guitar players with different styles," Lowery says of the supportive flair he brought to Connolly's rhythmic judding, adding, "I love doing overdubs, even if it's very small. Like, there are a lot of 'verbed-out delays on most of the choruses we do. It's just such a fun thing to do... the whole process of putting the color on the songs."

Beyond his layering prowess, Lowery also rekindled his relationship with a good lead on *Truth Killer*. His fandom for the Eighties-era shred of Jake E. Lee, Steve Vai, and Randy Rhoads arguably informed the tastily mapped-out phrasing of his "Won't Stop the Bleeding" solo, while a looser, vibe-based approach to vibrato shines through Lowery's work on "Superficial Drug." He also credits the guitar playing of Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor as an influence in terms of mixing dissonance into his overall style. Regardless of the route, *Truth Killer* is the first time Sevendust's lead guitarist has gone this big in a long while.

"Solos have always been an interesting thing with our band. There was a time when solos were out of fashion, in a way, so there are a lot of records we did where there weren't [*any big leads*]," Lowery says, explaining that even as recently as *Blood & Stone*, he mostly shied away from that side of his playing. "I got to a point a few records back where I went, 'Really, what's the purpose of our solos anymore? I'm not going to out-shred anybody.' I was jaded, but then I fell back in love with the art of soloing. It's not about how complex your phrases are, or what type of dexterity you have, it's just about the notes you choose, your style and your stamp."

Though Sevendust riffed out the bulk of *Truth Killer*'s rhythms with their beefy-toned baritones, Lowery preferred to rip out his leads in standard tuning. "With that baritone-ish, heavier gauge, you obviously can't do a guitar solo well, unless you're Stevie Ray Vaughan," he says of his nimble-fingered rationale. Lowery



AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Dean ML Multiscale, PRS baritone hollowbody (Connolly); PRS baritone (Lowery)
- **AMPS** 1971 Marshall Super Tremolo, Neural DSP Gojira plugin (Connolly); Kemper with a PRS Archon profile (Lowery)

was less precious when it came to picking which E-standard-set instrument to wail on. Sometimes he opted for his PRS signature, though he also incorporated a pair of Tele's Baskette had hanging around in his studio ("If I can do legato comfortably, then I can do a guitar solo on it").

WHILE *Truth Killer* often thrives through Lowery's excess, the album likewise features some of Sevendust's most subdued guitar performances. Take its opener, "I Might Let the Devil Win," an electronics-forward piece where synths, snap beats and Witherspoon's soulful croon encroach the liminal space between Nine Inch Nails and Canadian pop figure the Weeknd. Connolly notes that the song was an exercise in restraint. While he had tracked more than a dozen different guitar ideas, he and Baskette exercised a lot of that flash. Ultimately, they realized the song needed a less-is-more approach. A full three minutes pass before the band break out the distorted guitars.

"I think what fascinated me the most was the vocal hook," Connolly says of weighing his priorities. "It was almost like, 'We need to give that so much space that it's sort of scary.' When people hear it, they're going to be like, 'Where are the guitars? What's going on here?' It's different from what you're used to with Sevendust."

Even beyond his fret work, Connolly learned to lean back for *Truth Killer*. On earlier Sevendust releases — and more recently on Projected's 2022 full-length, *Hypoxia* — the guitarist had a tendency to overanalyze his contributions. An avid jogger — he'd completed the Boston Marathon a few days prior to connecting with Guitar World — he'd throw on his headphones, head off on a run, and make mental notes on the music before retracking a multitude of "eleventh hour" changeovers. While popping into Baskette's studio on a bass tracking day mercifully righted the pitch of "Love and Hate," Conolly generally learned to trust his producer, his bandmates, and himself to get the job done.

"I played it for a few people, for sure, but I didn't wear it out; I didn't put it on the running playlist; or blast it like every other record that we've done," he says of his change in process. "Sometimes you can spin yourself out by overthinking the mix. The more I listen to it, the worse it generally gets."

Despite a mix of sonic and psychological shifts, *Trust Killer* undoubtedly pays homage to Sevendust's percussively punchy heritage — while Connolly praises the modern metal heft he dimed out of Neural DSP's almighty Gojira plug-in, the sessions notably also had the guitarist cranking up the vintage Marshall Super Tremolo head he'd used on their self-titled debut. Working in impressive extremes, the album also manages to be both blatantly solo-centric and presented with Sevendust's softest touch. No matter the approach, Lowery suggests that his creative process before bringing music to the band can sometimes be unnerving. That *Truth Killer* sticks the landing is a testament to its members' unwavering trust in one another.

"My mental health depends on writing songs," Lowery says. "So there's an agonizing element to that where you'll second-guess things. You think, 'Oh, I'm old now; I'm not relevant,' all these insecurities that come with the ups and downs of writing... but you have other guys to lean on when you feel that way."

"I've spent more time with these guys than I've spent with any other human being — even my wife," Connolly says of the closeness he and his friends have honed over 30 years of music making. "Egos have taken a huge backseat to what Sevendust is as a whole. I know they're my better halves; I'm just a piece of this little puzzle."

"At the end of the day I just wanted to make myself happy, and I wanted to make my bandmates happy," Lowery says of the supportive kinship he and Connolly have built up with their Sevendust bandmates. "If the by-product of that is a record everyone thinks is cool, that's great. It is an agonizing thing when you're in the middle of it, though." GW

Opeth's Mikael Åkerfeldt [*left*] and former Opeth guitarist Peter Lindgren, conveniently photographed in 2003

21st Century Schizoid Men

How did a Swedish death metal band end up releasing one of the greatest progressive rock masterpieces of the modern age? Opeth's MIKAEL ÅKERFELDT looks back on 20 years of *Damnation*

BY AMIT SHARMA PHOTOS BY MICK HUTSON/REDFERNS

Ever SINCE THEIR formation in 1990, Swedish metallers Opeth have been no strangers to wild experimentation and unexpected detours into the creative leftfield. Even their 1995 *Orchid* debut showcased a bunch of musicians who simply refused to exist within the usual confines of death metal — borrowing elements from long-distant worlds such as jazz and classical and then fusing it all together into something greater than the sum of its parts.

But even the band themselves would admit that 2003's *Damnation* album — a 43-minute love letter to their vintage progressive rock influences — was something they never quite saw in their own destiny. After breaking out of the underground and making their mark internationally with the Steven Wilson-produced *Blackwater Park* in 2001, the Stockholm-based quartet now had the world's attention. For singer/guitarist and mastermind Mikael Åkerfeldt, who had undertaken the role of writing virtually all of the music early on, it was now time for his band to really spread their creative wings in the form of two records — the extreme brutality of *Deliverance* and its calmer companion, *Damnation*, released six months later. So when exactly did he realize his metal band was going to start working on music that would had little to do with the guttural roars and blastbeat fury they were typically associated with, and did he ever consider releasing *Damnation* as another project entirely?

"I *definitely* wanted it to be an Opeth record," says Åkerfeldt, talking to *GW* via video conference from his living room on a chilly day in Stockholm. "Before *Blackwater Park* it didn't feel like that much was happening around the band. We were active but we didn't tour or have much going for us. Suddenly that all changed. We became aware of the fact that people knew who we were. I had this idea of doing two records, one heavy and the other more ballady and calm...

Lindgren [*left*] and Åkerfeldt in 2003. "Usually I borrow extra guitars, but since we had a couple of PRS guitars and Peter's Les Paul, that was all we needed for those records," Åkerfeldt says today

"I'd always wanted to make a more chilled-out album, but at the same time had never envisioned it actually happening. So I pitched the idea for releasing both together, and the answer from our label at the time was no. I asked for some adjustments to our contract — an additional sheet of paper that said we'd make both for the price of one, counting as a single album. That's how much I wanted to do it! And, of course, then they said yes. It's a terrible idea for a band to do that, playing into the hands of the label, giving them an extra release for nothing — and they insisted on separate release dates — but that's how we got the green light."

For *Blackwater Park* you mainly used a black PRS CE24 that you'd bought from Katatonia guitarist Anders Nyström, as well as a Seagull acoustic. What do you remember about the gear in the studio for *Damnation*?

Not much! [*Laughs*] I'd recently gotten a Martin acoustic. It was a 000-16GT, the GT standing for Gloss Top. It was actually a guitar player from Nevermore, Curran Murphy, who sold it to me. I think he worked in a guitar shop. When we toured together on the *Blackwater Park* cycle, he told me he could hook me up with a nice Martin on a good deal. So I got it through him, and it ended up being one of the main instruments for the record. I had my first two PRS guitars, which I was very happy with. And even though I wanted an old-school kinda sound, I didn't really feel the need to get vintage gear. Most of the electric guitars were recorded with my blue Custom 24 from the late Eighties.

That would have been your second PRS guitar — the first being the black CE24, correct?

Yeah, it was the second PRS I ever owned and one I've used a lot in Opeth. It's a really good guitar that had been modified. There was originally a turn knob with the five pickup settings, which allowed you to split the humbuckers. It was a really good idea, except that you couldn't really get hold of it properly when you were on stage. I had the same problem with my first PRS and needed to put black skateboard tape to get traction around the switch. The blue one had been modified to a regular three-way toggle switch, and that was my main guitar for both *Deliverance* and *Damnation*. [*Former Opeth guitarist*] Peter Lindgren had his 1973 Gibson Les Paul Custom, from the year he was born. It was a really good guitar, though the frets were worn and the neck had been broken at some point. I can't remember if there was anything else. Usually I borrow some extra guitars from my friends, but since we had a couple of PRS guitars and Peter's Les Paul, that was all we needed for those records. I brought the black CE24 to the studio, but I can't remember using it much.

What can you tell us about the amps heard on the recordings?

Fredrik Nordström, who owned Studio Fredman, had a Fender Twin that we used for most of the clean tones. We even brought that along to the second studio, as we had to record a lot of things elsewhere. He had also had an Engl amp and a 5150, which is what most bands would have used when recording there, but for *Damnation* it was mainly the Twin. I think we might have used some of Steven Wilson's plug-ins too.

The opening track "Windowpane" is the one you've played live the most. There's a certain dreaminess to the ninth chord from the intro riff.

I actually learned about ninth chords from Stevie Wonder, particularly the song "Visions" from the 1973 album *Innervisions*. That song starts with those kinds of chords. I remember when I first heard it, I thought, "That's a beautiful chord; it sounds special — so I'll nick that at some point!"

The first solo, in the key of F♯ Dorian, feels like a nod to Andy Latimer from Seventies progressive rock group Camel.

I don't improvise much so I definitely sat down to write the solo. For both records, when it came to leads, I didn't have much of an idea before going into the studio. There was no demo-ing. I guess I just sat down and played. We usually set aside a day or two for solos, because they are usually written right there. Whatever I played on the record is what I thought sounded nice. And you're right — Andy Latimer was one of my idols at the time, and still is. It's a sound I almost tried to copy. I wanted to sound as close to him as I could. I think the end result was quite interesting. One thing I noticed while practicing that song for our last tour was that the guitar tone is very dry, much drier than I remember it. When I think of that solo, I imagine a nice spring reverb or delay or something — but it's dry and not as warm-sounding as I remember. Steven Wilson was there for a lot of the lead guitars. He always seemed to like my guitar playing and say things like, "That's beautiful, that's awesome, let's keep that!" And I'd be thinking, "*Really*?!" I think he gave me the confidence I needed. I've always loved coming up with things in the studio. I don't have a problem leaving it to the last minute.

There's another riff halfway into the song that, like a lot of these tracks, utilizes open-strings ringing against a motif that jumps around on one string.

I've always felt riffs like that can be a bit

hideous. I've been thinking about this stuff a lot lately, especially when relearning some of these old songs. For some reason, I used to like sticking to one string for leads and riffs. I'd often choose to play things around the neck instead of right under me. I soon learned I wasn't being very economical with how I played these parts, especially when I'm playing live and singing. I had to relearn some of these parts and play them in the same position. But it did help with writing some of these parts, like this riff, where I'd stick on one string and leave other strings ringing out to make it sound more colorful and interesting.

I always liked "Friends" by Led Zeppelin and wanted to do something like that, with the higher D chord against a lower dropped-D drone. So that's where I got the intro from... Thanks, Jimmy! And he nicked a lot of stuff himself, so I'm allowed to steal from him, right? Usually if I come up with something that sounds like an opening riff, it will set the tone for the rest of the song. Especially if it's something weird like "Closure." It's not a typical rock 'n' roll song. I didn't want to leave that kind of Middle Eastern sound and go into something more regular. The rest of the song had to feel moody and ethereal.

chorus came from an old song I'd written called "Mordet I Grottan" with a project called Sörskogen. I thought it was such a good chorus, I *had* to reuse it. The chord progression itself is pretty standard... but we'd never done anything like this before. We hadn't done much "standard shit" before *Damnation*, and I guess I wanted some of that stuff in there. I really like the folky pastoral parts from this song, with all the strummy chords. There's a moodiness to it all that I really like, which is why it's one we've played live a lot — along with "Hope Leaves," "Windowpane" and "In My Time of Need."

> **"It suddenly made me feel so mature. I remember getting the shivers! It was not... death metal"**
>
> —MIKAEL ÅKERFELDT

"In My Time of Need" has a very interesting Amin9 voicing, which adds to the ambience.

It's definitely an unusual-sounding chord. I play it with a barre across the fifth fret, the seventh fret on the A string, the ninth fret on the D, the G and B barred at the fifth before adding in the eighth fret on the B. That song's working title was "Old Man's Rock." I wanted a big chorus, and I probably nicked it from somewhere, as I did with "Windowpane," actually... that song's vocal melody line was taken from *Grand Theft Auto III*, believe it or not! There was a song you could play on the radio within the game and it had a nice vocal line, so I took inspiration from there. With "In My Time of Need," I just wanted a singalong type of ballad. I like those simplified songs every now and then, especially as we like to go off on a tangent and do things that are weird with confusing time signatures. My favorite type of music is usually the simple stuff, straightforward songs. My favorite tracks that I've written are usually the simpler ones, though I wouldn't say this is one of my best, funnily enough.

"Closure" is one of the album's more experimental offerings, with its haunting Middle Eastern melodies and frenetic outro.

"Hope Leaves" — along with "Windowpane" and 2016's "Will O the Wisp" — is one of the very few songs you've used a capo on. Was that to make the wide stretches a little easier?

It was just luck! The use of a capo wasn't really something I thought about too much. I just stuck it on there for the fun of it. I was lucky in a way, because playing it higher in B instead of A added a fragility to my voice that I wouldn't have gotten otherwise. As you say, I've only used a capo on a few Opeth tracks, like "Windowpane," "Hope Leaves" and "Will O the Wisp" — the first two on the second fret and the latter on the fifth. I guess it did make more sense for "Hope Leaves" because it's a wide stretch. When we play it live these days we don't bother with the capo, though we still have one for "Windowpane." I don't know why — maybe just to make the singing a little easier for me!

The opening riff from "To Rid the Disease" is a great example of how you can take an idea and simply move one note one fret at a time to create a lot of tension and dissonance.

That intro probably came from listening to loads of Queensrÿche when I was younger. It's a good song, I think. The

You must be very proud of this album. Some would even say it's your finest work.

A lot of people seem to love it. I remember we were actually mixing *Deliverance* with Andy Sneap when I got the final *Damnation* mix from Steven Wilson. Me and Peter were in a hotel room in England. We only had one set of headphones and a portable CD player, so we couldn't listen to it together — it had to be one at a time. I asked if I could go first and he said, "Sure, go for it!" I remember closing my eyes and thinking "Oh, my god!" It suddenly made me feel so mature. I remember getting the shivers! It was not... *death metal*. At the time I really loved death metal, and I guess I still do, to some extent. But I was amazed we could do something like that. And though we've always been experimental, it made me realize we could progress into genres unknown to us or our fans. Steven's mix was amazing; I mean, the songs are good, some of them I would consider great, but the mix is perfect. It's not dated or too retro, it's just really atmospheric. There was a lot of Mellotron, which I was happy about. I wanted more keyboards and vintage sounds, and the mix brought it all out. I don't know who else could've done justice to those songs. Looking back, I'm very proud of what we achieved. GW

BIGGIE SMALLS

Ten diminutive practice amps that'll actually inspire you to practice BY AMIT SHARMA

PRACTICE, WE'RE OFTEN told, makes perfect. As much as you might love the sound of your boutique 100-watt head feeding into a three-foot-wide pedalboard and pair of oversized cabinets, no one, not even the world's biggest rock star, needs to practice like that. At the end of the day, the only person who needs to hear you practice is you — not your cohabitants, your neighbors or even the crowd waiting for you to take the stage.

It's much better to have something transportable with enough tones covered so you can make the most out of your session, whether it's taking place at home, on the move or in a dressing room in the hours before showtime. Every guitar player will have different needs from said devices — some might prefer a battery-powered unit with one basic sound that's just about loud enough to be heard in a quiet hotel room. Others might want something socket-driven that's able to push more air in order to cut through all the background noise, with options for overdrive and maybe even an aux in to jam along to recordings and backing tracks.

Then there are those who might want to go completely wireless — or have hundreds of tones and effects at their beck and call via Bluetooth connectivity, and others who place more importance on bonus features like a looper or tuner. It's also worth remembering that some of these practice amps, such as the Positive Grid Spark Go, Boss Katana-Air and Nux Mighty Space, can double as a portable studio, offering the latest tones to record direct whenever creativity strikes. There's no right or wrong; what's overkill for some might be essential for others. Whatever you're looking for, there's something out there that's tailor-made for you, which is why we've rounded up 10 of our favorite practice amps available today.

POSITIVE GRID
SPARK GO

positivegrid.com, $129

Every time Positive Grid updates the Spark range, they leave us scratching our heads as to how they managed to pack so many features into such impossibly modest yet staggeringly versatile units. And still this year's Spark Go came as a huge surprise, rehousing all of their tones and tools into a box roughly the same size as an MXR pedal. Its biggest selling point, however, is just how deceptively loud it is for a 5-watt amp, powered by computational audio to harness what the company calls a "jaw-dropping, room-filling sound with advanced acoustics" for eight hours with every charge. Offering users full access to its long list of amp and pedal sounds via the app, with 50,000 tones available on the cloud and learning tools such as Auto Chords and Smart Jam to help you get better quicker, we'd go as far as saying it's the smallest — and most intelligent — device of its kind. Where the Spark goes from here is anyone's guess.

BOSS
KATANA-AIR

boss.info, $429

When Boss launched the Katana series in 2016, they wanted to create a range of digital amps that were sonically versatile, feature-rich and affordable. Seven years later, given the popularity of the line, it'd be fair to say they delivered on that promise. The Katana-Air includes five unique amp characters and access to more than 50 Boss effects, which — given the company's legacy in such matters — is a big bonus. What makes this particular model so cutting edge is the fact that it requires no cables whatsoever when using batteries — though, of course, it's great to have the option for AC power as well. The included transmitter charges when docked on the amp and can provide 12 hours of playing time, automatically going into standby when not in use. While it's fairly compact in size, there's an impressive 30 watts of power on tap, and given that you'll find six onboard memory slots for your favorite tones, plus more options to tweak or stream via Bluetooth. There's a lot to like here.

BLACKSTAR
DEBUT 10E

blackstaramps.com, $89

Given how popular their delay-equipped Fly mini amps have become for musicians on the move, it's no surprise that this year's new Debut models cater incredibly well for those wanting to work on their chops. The 10E is the smallest of the three, and therefore the most transportable, also featuring a built-in delay — this particular one simulating a tape-style effect. Which ultimately means lead guitarists hoping to run through their solos backstage won't need anything else other than this amp, a cable and their guitar, and can leave their prized echo units on the board where they belong. The EQ knob is Blackstar's patented ISF control, allowing users to find the right balance between more "aggressive" American and "woody" British tones. It's also multi-functional thanks to the pair of HiFi-like stereo linear speakers, meaning it can double up nicely for listening to music, watching films and gaming. You really can't go wrong at this price.

FENDER
MINI '65 TWIN

fender.com, $59

When it comes to aesthetics, it's hard not to have a soft spot for the Fender range of mini amps — which, as well as this '65 Twin, also features scaled-down versions of their Deluxe, Tonemaster and '57 Twin staples. Running off just one 9V battery to produce 1 watt of noise, these are among the quietest devices of their kind and aimed at players who aren't necessarily looking to fill space so much as simply hear themselves. Just as you'd expect to find with their bigger brothers, the tones range from crystal clean to medium crunch — any more gain wouldn't have been faithful to the original designs and perhaps a little blasphemous. The mini amps also come with a tilt-back kickstand and a belt clip on the rear, in case you find yourself on the move while playing or in need of more juice. With the right grill cloths and miniature knobs for each version, the attention to detail is perhaps what's most attractive here.

ORANGE
CRUSH MINI

orangeamps.com, $75

As impressive as they often are, not everyone wants a practice amp that comes with options for thousands of extra tones via Bluetooth software. If this sounds like you, then something like the Crush Mini might be the way to go, with three simple controls for Gain, Shape and Volume to take you through a range of EQs and drives. However, there are also a few extra features that make it more versatile — from the handy built-in tuner to the headphone out and aux in. If you want to push more air, you can even connect it to a cabinet thanks to a handy speaker out that can turn this tiny box into a solid-state amp head. All in all, it's not quite as basic as it looks, but if you're after something user-friendly, this one is very straightforward indeed. All it needs is a 9V battery and you're good to go.

LANEY
MINISTACK-IRON

laney.co.uk, $179

Typically when you find a miniature version of an amp stack, the cabinet element tends to be more of a novelty than anything else, functioning as a throwback of sorts to the main design. What makes this tiny take on the Ironheart impressive is that the cabinet is actually loaded with four speakers at one quarter of their original size in 3-inch form, which helps project more low-end punch and mid-range clarity. And much like the full-size Laney heads, these 6-watt versions happily cater for high-gain tones from classic rock to modern metal, as well as cleans. There's an on-board digital delay, a headphone socket, an aux in and a Laney Smart Interface socket — which, when using the provided cable, gives you access to thousands of digital tones via the app. The Ministack-Iron can run on six AA batteries or a power supply and while neither are included, it's always nice to have options.

NU-X
MIGHTY SPACE

nuxefx.com, $449

What would happen if you took the wireless connectivity and power of something like the Katana-Air and added in the futuristic technology from Positive Grid's Spark series? You'd end up with something like the Mighty Space, recently launched by Chinese innovators Nu-x, who have taken the industry by storm over the last few years, thanks to their reputation for designing affordable products of incredibly high quality. This practice amp carries 21 premium guitar and bass presets, 34 built-in impulse responses with space for 20 more, more than 40 effects, a dual footswitch that can also control its drum and loop features — and then there's all the deep-diving you can do through the MightyAmp app and Mighty Editor software. There's also a headphone out, an aux in and even a speaker out that can power a 4x12, which makes it the most multi-functional practice amp out there, lasting seven hours with every charge.

BRIAN MAY REVEALED HE'D BEEN WORKING ON A NEW AMP THAT WOULD ALLOW GUITAR PLAYERS TO UNLOCK STADIUM-CONQUERING TONES IN THEIR OWN LIVING ROOMS

VOX
BRIAN MAY MV50

voxamps.co.uk, $249

A few months ago, Brian May revealed he'd been working on a new amp that would allow guitar players to unlock stadium-conquering tones in their own living rooms. He even went as far as saying he "wouldn't mind" trying it out on the world's largest stages himself and "seeing how this shapes up." It's no ordinary head, given that it can fit in the palm of your hands and weighs only 540g, using Vox's revolutionary Nutube to create unbelievable amounts of power in a small enclosure. As you'd expect, the mini heads are inspired by the AC30 and feature a switchable treble booster to hone in on the guitarist's genre-shaping sounds. Up front you'll find three dials for Gain, Tone and Volume while on the back there's a headphone/line out, an EQ switch for Flat or Deep and three impedance settings, which allow it to be used with nearly any kind of cab. For another $170, you can even get the matching 1x8 cab.

MARSHALL
MG10

marshall.com, $139

The small practice amp Marshall describes as "simple yet mighty" has been around for a long time — and for good reason. It's easily transportable and louder than most amps its size (the MG10 runs on the provided power cable instead of batteries) as well as offering a second channel catering for the British-style overdrives the brand are synonymous with. There's an emulated headphone out and an mp3/line in, plus a single contour control to shape the EQ, and that's pretty much it. Like the Orange Crush, it's very much a no-frills kind of affair aimed at musicians who just want to plug in and play rather than tweak around with effects and impulse responses. Fewer distractions, after all, will probably mean you can spend more time doing what you bought the amp to do in the first place — helping yourself prepare for the next rehearsal, live performance or studio session. This one's a timeless classic.

LINE 6
SPIDER V20 MK2

line6.com, $149

There was a time when Line 6 were the undisputed market leaders when it came to all things modeling. These days, there's a whole host of companies leading the charge in different ways with forward-thinking designs, but that doesn't mean the Pod pioneers have been left behind. This 20-watt combo is just as feature-rich as you'd expect — with channels ranging from Acoustic and Clean to Crunch and, of course, the rather infamous Insane. There's space for 16 presets, slots for three effects at any given time, a tuner, a tap tempo plus a headphone out. The mini-USB means you can connect to the Spider Remote app to update the firmware and edit your tones, as well as record what you play. All in all, given its loudness and overall versatility for the price, it could very well be the best all-arounder of the bunch.

FRANK HOENSCH/REDFERNS

WARREN PEACE

WARREN HAYNES and GOV'T MULE return with *Peace...Like a River*, a sublime example of longform rock 'n' soul that draws inspiration from John Lennon, the Doors and the multipart masterpieces of Kansas and Queen

BY MARK McSTEA

Warren Haynes performs with Gov't Mule in Berlin, Germany

BACK IN LATE 2021, when Gov't Mule released the Grammy-nominated *Heavy Load Blues*, their first proper all-blues album, they actually had another completely different album already gassed up, greased up and ready to hit the streets. *Peace... Like a River*, the previously underwraps album, was recorded at the same time as *Heavy Load Blues*, with the band working on tracks for that album by day, then switching gear to work on the bluesier disc at night.

As Warren Haynes recounts, the band took a novel approach to the already unusual concept of recording two albums at once: "We set up two sets of gear in two studios, keeping everything live for the blues album, which was done in a small studio, adjacent t o the main studio where *Peace* was laid down. Absolutely no gear was shared between the two projects — guitars, amps, you name it — everything was kept separate to maintain the two distinct sounds and feels."

The resulting album is an ambitious, stylistically diverse record that covers many bases, with some surprising guest vocals by Billy Gibbons and Billy Bob Thornton thrown into the mix. Given that it has been sitting in the can for quite a while, Haynes is still happy with

> **"THE ALTERNATIVE TO DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING IS FOR SONGS TO GET SHORTER AND SHORTER AND SIMPLER AND SIMPLER, TO WHERE EVERYTHING IS JUST A SOUNDBITE — AND I REALLY HATE THAT IDEA"**

the final result and wouldn't change a thing, even with the benefit of hindsight.

"I'm very happy with it," he says. "In fact, I'm probably happier with this record than anything we've ever done. I was really pleased with the material I'd written during lockdown; that was one of the few good things that came out of that whole situation — I had so much time to write. I felt really good about the songs, having had so much time to work on them and refine things. I think everybody, regardless of whether they were musicians or whatever, was faced with the same dilemma: how to make the best of a bad situation."

Haynes is looking forward to taking the album out on the road with Gov't Mule, and also plans to do a few of their legendary "Dark Side of the Mule" shows for the final time in 2023. "Yeah, we'll spend a couple of days running down the set, more from a show production point of view as we'll have a few extra musicians with us on stage," he says. "We'll kick off with a Mule set and then we'll gradually morph into the Pink Floyd stuff. It should be a really interesting show."

You've said you had to change your usual method of working for the new album, as you'd normally try out songs live before recording. Was the change in modus operandi a positive thing?

WARREN HAYNES: It meant a lot more rehearsal on the front end. We spent about eight days in the studio just rehearsing and prepping the songs before we ever started rolling tape. It was cool, although I wouldn't want to do every record that way. It felt so good to be back together in the studio, working on new material, that we just kind of took a slower pace in the beginning to get back up to speed, but it really felt great to be back together in that environment. Everybody was just so happy to be back in a creative mode, and we spent a lot more time in the studio than we normally would.

With you having recorded it so long ago, have you been building up a bunch of new songs for the next album?

I tend to go in phases; it's a bit like a sine wave. [*Laughs*] There can be extended periods where I don't write very much — it's not always in sync with the album cycle, but I guess, in most cases it kinda works out that way. There were a lot of songs that were written for this album that we didn't record, so I look forward to dusting them off in the future, and I've also just recently started to write a lot again, but I did go several months without writing anything once we finished recording this album.

Most of your new songs tend to stretch out, so that the album is relatively long by modern standards. Do you prefer to have the luxury of space to be able to stretch out, musically?

We've always gravitated to longer songs and stretching out, especially live, where they tend to grow even more. Improvisation is a huge part of what we do. But also, from an arrangement standpoint, I think that is something that's missing from most of today's music — songs with detailed arrangements and a lot of moving parts. I don't know if you could get away with that in the mainstream world these days. We're trying to bring it back in our own way because, I suppose, it's a big part of what we love. A lot of the songs on this album have seven or eight different sections, as opposed to the normal two or three these days.

As you said, there are a lot of parts to most of the songs. Did you know how the songs would work out ahead of time, or did the arrangements evolve out of working with the band?

Probably half and half. Sometimes I envision the songs having a lot of moving parts from the very beginning, but sometimes it just feels natural as we're starting to work the songs up as a band. I think it's a product of the things that influenced me, songs like [*Kansas'*] "Carry On Wayward Son" or even [*Queen's*] "Bohemian Rhapsody." Those were real complex songs that you'd hear on the radio all the time. It was a challenge for the listener, in a good way, and I think people were up for that challenge. As long as you maintain the listener's interest, it's a good thing, but in today's world, where peoples' attention spans are really short, why not challenge that a little bit?

We're in an age where everything is constantly being dumbed down and reduced to the minimum.

Yeah, and the alternative to doing what we're doing is for songs to get shorter and shorter and simpler and simpler, to where eventually every-

JUSTIN BORUCKI (WARREN) SHERVIN LAINEZ (MULE)

thing is just a soundbite, and I really hate that idea.

With the addition of the five songs on the bonus EP, *Time of the Signs*, there was enough material for a whole double album. Was that ever a possibility?

We always wind up releasing everything we finish. Our fans really like the deluxe versions of whatever we put out; we actually sell more of the deluxe versions than the standard versions. So in that way it kind of is actually a double album, with a shorter version available for people who don't want all the excess. Our fans love as much as they can get, I think, and I'm that kind of music fan. I'd be the same way too, buying someone else's record — if it was someone I really liked. I'd want as much of their music as possible.

It's a double album by stealth.

Yeah. [*Laughs*] Even the standard CD runs at about 80 minutes.

It's interesting that, although there are a lot of guitar parts, layers and textures, there's always space for the guitar to breathe. Is that something you're consciously striving for?

We always record live, so the interplay among the band is the most important factor; the conversational aspect of the way we play is what we're trying to capture. That interplay is more important for me than for me to try to take up a bunch of space or even play some acrobatic solo. I much prefer the call and response that takes place naturally when we play together.

You always seem to have the song as the primary focus, so that solos serve the song and can be fairly minimal.

Every time we go into the studio I tell myself I want to do more overdubbing and experimenting with different solos and stuff, but I always end up going with the solos that I do live in the take, because it's more inspired, I think, to play according to what I'm hearing the other guys play. It's much more gratifying to me than playing to an existing track. If it feels good, we wind up just keeping it, and through the years I've figured out that that's the most representative way to capture what it is we do in that live moment.

"Made My Peace" is redolent of the Beatles, isn't it?

Absolutely, yeah. It has more of a Beatles and John Lennon influence than anything we've ever recorded, and I even sensed that being the case while I was writing it. I double-tracked the vocal in the same way Lennon did, which was a deliberate nod to the influence, but the orchestration also wears that influence, and even the slide solo pays a subtle homage to George Harrison. The arrangement is a little ambitious in the way it goes into all those different sec-

[*facing page*] Not an uncommon sight: Warren Haynes with a Gibson Les Paul

[*above*] Gov't Mule [*from left*]: Matt Abts, Danny Louis, Haynes and Jorgen Carlsson

tions; most of those sections are definitely very Beatles influenced. We wouldn't normally go that far down that road.

There's quite a funk feel to "Peace I Need" and "Head Full of Thunder."
I feel like we're always mixing influences and genres. These are very much rock songs with a lot of moving parts that each carry their own influences. The main riff for "Peace" was written just before rehearsal, but I didn't know what everybody else was going to play. When we worked it up everybody brought things to it that took it to a whole different place.

What were the main guitars and amps you used for the album?
I used three different non-reverse Firebirds that have three P90s in them, and a couple of non-reverse Firebirds with Burstbuckers. The guitar I used most, though, was my signature Les Paul. I also used a '59 Les Paul on a couple of songs. I have a Custom Shop blonde ES-335 that saw a lot of action on this record. I also recently got a new Custom Shop 335 with P90s that made its way onto a couple of songs. There was some Epiphone Casino and an Epiphone 12-string here and there. I also played a Flying V on "Blue Blue Wind" on the bonus EP, and a D'Angelico Excel on "The River Only Flows One Way" for the jazzy stuff. For acoustics I used a 1970 Gibson Hummingbird, a J-200 and a Gibson 12-string that belonged to [*original Gov't Mule bassist*] Allen Woody. The amps were mostly Homestead or the Diaz blended in with an Alessandro small recording amp. Soldanos, Marshalls and a Vox AC30 also appeared here and there, but not as much as on previous albums.

Billy Bob Thornton adds vocals to "The River Only Flows One Way." How does something like that work? Do you have a specific sound and feel you're looking for, or do you just ask him to go with what he feels and see how it turns out?
When I wrote that song, I knew I wanted the verses to be a kind of spoken-word, demented beat poetry, and I knew I didn't want it to be my voice there. When I thought about Billy Bob, it seemed like a perfect fit.

And there's quite a Doors vibe on "After the Storm."
Yeah, there is definitely a strong Doors feel on that one; in fact, I used a Robby Krieger Les Paul for the guitar solo. It seemed to make sense. This was the last song written for the record — it was actually written in the studio. Danny [*Louis, keyboards/guitar*] and Matt [*Abts, drums*] were in the cutting room jamming on what turned out to be the basic track for this song; I was listening in the control room, and I just started writing lyrics down that were inspired by what I was hearing. When they took a break I said, "Let's turn this into a song," and the whole thing came together really quickly. The Doors feel grew organically from what they came up with in the first place.

SHERVIN LAINEZ (MULE) JUSTIN BORUCKI (WARREN)

> **"I ALWAYS END UP GOING WITH THE SOLOS THAT I DO LIVE IN THE TAKE, BECAUSE IT'S MORE INSPIRED"**

You take a lot of guitars into the studio. How do you decide what to use for a given track?
The Firebirds are normally tuned down a half-step, so if I'm in E♭ or A♭, that'll normally be a Firebird to get a twangier sound. The song usually cries out for a certain type of sound; sometimes we'll try it one way with a guitar, and if we don't like it, we'll experiment a bit, but usually the one that cries out to be played is the one that winds up on the record.

What keeps everything fresh for you after so long on the road?
We have such a large catalogue of music that we can draw from at any time. The fact that we have such a big setlist — so we can do different songs every night — really helps to keep me sane! We'll play up to 200 songs over the course of a tour, and that keeps all of us from going nuts. It would drive me crazy to play the same songs every night. GW

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ROLLIN' AND TUMBLIN'

ON *STARCATCHER*, **GRETA VAN FLEET**'S NEW BACK-TO-BASICS ALBUM, GUITARIST **JAKE KISZKA** HEADS FOR THE HILLS, CRANKS UP THE VOLUME AND TAPS INTO HIS COUNTRY BLUES INFLUENCES

BY ANDREW DALY PHOTOS BY PAIGE SARA

Jake Kiszka with his SG-shaped 1961 Gibson Les Paul. "My SG is my number one," he says. "I love that guitar, and we've done a lot together. So that's usually my main paintbrush while I'm in the studio"

JAKE KISZKA WAS born to rock. And since shuttering onto the scene back in 2017 with his band, Greta Van Fleet, he's done just that. Of course, it hasn't always been easy, considering the band is perpetually labeled as Led Zeppelin clones. But no matter; throughout three stellar records, the Frankenmuth, Michigan rockers have kicked all preconceived notions square in the teeth, leaving gain-drenched trails of destruction in their wake.

As for Kiszka, he's soft-spoken and unassuming. Upon dialing in with him, it was immediately apparent he's not the sort of six-stringer worried about accolades and hyper-commercialism. No, Kiszka is the spiritual type who wields his trusty Gibson SG as a sacred talisman through which he channels otherworldly notes, gargantuan chords and chugging riffs.

And what of those Zeppelin comparisons? After years spent explaining himself, Kiska now happily straddles the line between wearing his influences like a badge of courage and being entirely unbothered. Of course, there are worse comparisons to be made, and if Greta Van Fleet's latest, *Starcatcher*, is any indication, the band — and its swaggering guitarist — are intent on letting the music do the talking.

"We've gotten to a place in this band where we're able to communicate our ideas freely and openly," Kiszka says. "We don't only feel the basic emotions of happiness and sadness; there are other things — like jealousy, spite, love, hate, anger and kindness. I think there's a duality in blending those emotions, and we've done everything in our power to have that present in our music."

Before all the hubbub surrounding the proverbial "New Wave of Classic Rock" began to cascade down upon the masses, Greta Van Fleet were just another band of hopefuls. But it didn't take long for their dreams to become a reality, as Greta Van Fleet's two 2017 EPs, *Black Smoke Rising* and *From the Fires*, raged forth like a shutter shock sent from the heavens. From that point forward, there was no denying that a new, yet somehow old, era of rock music was upon us.

Now, six years later, Greta Van Fleet continue to ride an unforeseen wave of fanfare and acclaim that's yet to break upon the shore entirely. In 2018 and 2021, two more records came forth — and conquered — in the form of *Anthem of the Peaceful Army* and *The Battle at Garden's Gate*. Still, comparisons to bands of old dogged Greta Van Fleet, but never enough

to impact their fortunes or deter an undying cult fanbase.

And so, here we are in 2023 on the precipice of Greta Van Fleet's latest and greatest, *Starcatcher*. It would be all too easy to assume that the sounds herein are merely shadows of the past; and sure, in some ways, they are. But isn't that the case with all rock music to some degree? Regardless, Kiszka and company have heard the calls and have risen to the challenge of crafting perhaps their most intriguing record yet.

When asked about the balancing act between stylistic evolution and the status quo, Kiszka thinks a bit before saying, "We have a lot of influences, and those influences have the potential to take us in different directions musically. We allowed ourselves to be free and chase some of that, which was really important for us. I feel this record is powerful in ways that our others aren't. And I feel that the dynamic within the band offers everybody within it something, which allows us to offer our audience something."

"I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYONE PLAY GUITAR LIKE ELMORE JAMES, AND I DON'T THINK ANYONE EVER WILL AGAIN"

Some 10 years after its formation, and six years after the dueling EPs that shook the world, Greta Van Fleet have seen their music appear across countless movie, television and video game soundtracks. For a group still so young, there's no denying they've become a perpetual back of the zeitgeist in the form of a rock 'n' roll backdrop. But if you were to ask Kiszka, his band hasn't reached its apex. Not even close.

"We're always chasing something", Kiszka says. "If you're not chasing something, what's the point of being creative? So we don't settle or compromise. We follow our hearts and go in with the mindset that the sky's the limit. And when we're writing a song, it always comes from the heart, no matter the motif or whatever is going on. We never think, 'Okay, we want to write this or that.' And we've never looked at it like, 'We're gonna write a hit for this thing or this reason.' We've never cared about making music for radio or competing with other bands. It's strictly about following the hand that guides."

In support of *Starcatcher,* Kiszka dialed in with *Guitar World* to discuss Greta Van Fleet's continued evolution, the addition of some tasty new pedals into his mix, incorporating the blues, his love for Gibson SGs and the unique dynamic of sharing space in a band with family.

How have Greta Van Fleet evolved for *Starcatcher*?

A lot of this record has been about going back to our roots. At least, that's certainly been the case for me. Foundationally, many of our influences go back to the blues and things like that. I needed to get back to the basics of players like Lightnin' Hopkins, Elmore James, Robert Johnson, Lead Belly, Muddy Waters and Albert King. So I think *Starcatcher* is very foundational in ways that maybe our previous records weren't. I think we've gone in directions I'd call "cinematic," and I think the mindset this time was, "Let's dial it back, get out of the city, go back into the country and put some of those types of songs together." The result is what I'd say is a pretty heavy record.

I can't help but notice *Starcatcher's* primal nature. Was it your intention to go in a more rhythmic direction?

Yeah, you're right. If you listen, there are tons of primitive aspects that are undeniably human, powerful and visceral. I think we went in wanting to elicit those types of sounds. And, again, that's us harkening back to our blues influences. It's a genuine evolution of all the sounds that brought us here. Kind of like those that came before us, this is us staking our claim to our contribution to our generation. It's a love letter to the echoes of the power of rock music, which I think the world always needs more of. [*Laughs*]

How did those influences directly impact your approach?

I think my sound is pretty well established, so it was important for me to venture into territories I've never explored. I began experimenting with alternative tunings, using a B-bender, playing in open C and all sorts of new pedals. I hadn't taken that journey before; conceptually, these were things I'd never done. So I allowed myself to dive into that world, which led to a very open-ended approach. I think that was important because the guitar sounds were pretty ambient on our last record [The Battle at Garden's Gate]. This time, I wanted to try and have the guitars be more full-frontal and in your face.

Tell me about some of those pedals and the amps you paired them with.

For amps, I've been using this Marshall Astoria, which is a Chicago Music Exchange exclusive. And with the pedals, I guess I'm kind of a purist, so I didn't get too much into the boutique stuff. I went with an Electro-Harmonix Holy Grail reverb, which did a lot of heavy lifting. I've gotten into using a wet/dry system at this point, and I've also been using a lot of stereo effects, like slap delays and phasers. I was able to convert my wah-wah pedal with the help of my guitar tech to where if I've got my toe or heel on it, it pans back and forth, giving me a huge, wide dynamic range.

Did your SGs (and SG-shaped '61 Les Paul) play a big part on this record?

I've always loved Gibson SGs because many of the guys I grew up listening to played them. Seeing those British Invasion guys up there playing an SG made me want to be that guy. I knew that it was what I wanted to do. I wanted to be the guy to get up there and evoke emotion, and Gibson guitars have always been a great vehicle for me to do that. They're dynamic guitars; you can do so much with them depending on the pickups, amps, etc. So, my Gibson definitely played a big part in this record, as it helped me bring out the thunder and lightning. With an SG, I can let out my visceral,

GATHERING OF THE TRIBES

JAKE KISZKA's guide to Greta Van Fleet's key influences

By Andrew Daly

GRETA VAN FLEET are perpetually compared to the likes of Led Zeppelin. And while guitarist Jake Kiszka won't deny those influences, he's more than eager to help peel back the onion in terms of what makes the darlings of Michigan tick.

We'll let him take it from here.

"It's a difficult thing because, yeah, we are influenced by Zeppelin, the blues and a ton of British Invasion bands; there's no denying that. We've heard it for years and been asked about it, but like we've always said, it's not as if we set out to be them.

"But instead of just saying that, I'd point people to our other influences..." ⋙

animalistic side as a player. Honestly, that's difficult for me to attain with anything else.

I'm sure the SG was essential for your leads, but did you deploy any new guitars while tracking your rhythm parts?

My SG is my number one. I love that guitar, and we've done a lot together. So that's usually my main paintbrush while I'm in the studio. But I'm open to other guitars and use them as I need to. I'll be honest; I'm sure there are tons of different guitars on this record in small doses. But I'd have to go back into the engineer's logbook to try and tease them all out. I know that I used an ES-335, and I also broke out this old budget Telecaster. And there were some spots where I used a baritone guitar, so there's an assortment. I guess I don't always pay attention to those sorts of details; I'm more about creating textures while painting, so to speak. But I love how you can layer guitars and make profoundly complex and outrageous sounds. Of course, that's always tough to recreate live. [*Laughs*]

Do you chase sounds or let the riffs and licks come to you?

That's an interesting question. I think maybe a lot of players do chase sounds, but I don't really go about it that way. I've always had a classic sound but never pursued that. I think subconsciously, a lot of that has been driven deep within my DNA as a guitar player. That said, there are certain sounds that I'm trying to achieve, but I'm not necessarily trying to emulate something that has been done before.

You mentioned the blues earlier. How is that most present on this record?

You can hear the blues in my playing on this record more than any of our others. Having said that, Elmore James has always been huge for me. His slide playing is one of the things that has always influenced me. But beyond his slide playing, I think it's most present in my attitude and mood. The truth is I've never heard anyone play guitar like Elmore James, and I don't think anyone ever will again. He was the only one to do it that way, so I'm trying to sound like him. But I did work to try and capture the attitude he had.

Did the success of Greta Van Fleet's early EPs take you by surprise? Have you felt boxed in by that success since?

It kind of did because I don't think that was ever prevalent in our minds. We were just trying to offer something our generation hadn't yet covered. From our perspective, this music was something we felt the world needed more of. Music had stepped away from it for so long in terms of new bands, and for us, it was authentic and organic to steer things back that way. It's what we came from, and it's real for us. We never imagined it would take off; we were trying to write the best songs and play with as much intensity as possible. But you're right; we were right there at the beginning to kick things off for our generation. But I don't think we've ever felt boxed in; we've always been intent on creating music that moves us and the fans.

What challenges came about from being thrust into the spotlight so quickly?

We could feel it early on that something was going on. We'd play these shows, and there was just so much electricity in the air around us. I remember being on stage early on and feeling the hair stand up on the back of my neck. Before we knew it, more and more bands were getting involved, which is great. But as far as challenges, this is exactly what we wanted. We had objectives in mind, and for us, the sky has always been the limit.

Brothers sharing space in a rock 'n' roll band has ended in disaster for many

[*from left*] Josh Kiszka, Danny Wagner and Jake Kiszka perform in Detroit, May 25, 2018

[*left*] The Who's Pete Townshend during the European leg of the band's *Tommy* tour in England, October 1970

DAVID REDFERN/REDFERN (TOWNSHEND) SCOTT LEGATO/GETTY IMAGES (GVF)

before you, but Greta Van Fleet has thrived. Why?

We do seem to be doing alright. [*Laughs*] But, man, you're right; the list of family bands that have shredded themselves to the point of self-implosion is pretty extensive. But I guess the secret is we're good to each other. We try not to get aggressive, and we give each other space if we need it. And honestly, a lot of that stuff that could have hurt us; we got most of it out early on. Sure, we'd get together to play or rehearse, and sometimes things would happen where someone throws a chair across a room or a door gets broken down, but we learned how to navigate all that. In any band — especially one you share with family — there's always gonna be some bloodshed. And we get into those arguments, have creative differences and all of that, but we've always let the passion we share guide us rather than whatever momentary thing stands in our way.

How will *Starcatcher* allow Greta Van Fleet to further their connection with their audience?

We love all the records we've put out, but *Starcatcher,* in particular, sounds absolutely gigantic. I can't wait to get out and perform these songs live. As we've been rehearsing them, we're seeing more and more just how dynamic and full of dimension they are. I think that will allow us to be more informative as performers because these songs are very direct; that will enable us to form an interesting connection with the audience. I think it will allow us to tell more stories through the music. Our goal is always to inspire emotion, and these songs are truly more powerful than anything we've ever written.

You've had a lot of success with songs like "Highway Tune," but you don't strike me as someone who cares too much about that sort of thing.

You're right about that. We appreciate our success, but none of the commercial stuff ever enters my mind. It's funny because a lot of groups will write specifically for radio, or they'll have a particular commercial objective, and they chase that intent, you know? But we've always come from a deeply instinctual place. When I'm putting a song together, there's always something beyond what I can see or touch that's guiding my hands to do whatever I'm doing. I see myself as a courier, and whatever comes from it, that's cool by me. GW

NATIVE AMERICAN MUSIC

"This is something I've never really talked about before, but we're big fans of Native American music. For whatever reason, we had those records lying around growing up, and me and my brothers got really into them. We were into that stuff even before the foundational rock stuff. Only later did we find rock 'n' roll and all that music. Because of how we sound, most people assume it's the other way around, but it's not."

EARLY BLUES

"The foundation of Greta Van Fleet is deeply rooted in Native American music and culture. And to me, there are tons of parallels between the Native Americans and the early blues guys. Many early blues music and melodies come directly from Native American culture and themes. I often go back to the term 'visceral,' but that music gives me those feelings. Early folk-blues tunes are loaded with devilish attitudes and great riffs."

POP AND ALTERNATIVE

"This is the type of stuff that people really wouldn't expect, but we're into all kinds of pop and alternative music. We listen to a ton of alt-J, which is a contemporary band that I don't think anyone would expect to influence us. A lot of their weird tunings are just so inspiring. And then you've got guys like Chris Stapleton, the White Stripes and even Adele — her sense of melody and the cinematic quality of what she does influences us."

WORLD MUSIC

"The cool thing happening as we continue to travel the world is that we get to incorporate more and more world music into what we do. It could be Spanish, African or early English folk music; we love it all. And I genuinely believe that what we know as rock today is an amalgam of all that; we just don't realize it. There's a trade route within music; if you trace it back or even look outside, it's so enlightening. And if you're wondering why a lot of that dried up, I think too many bands don't have those worldly influences. You can write an infinite number of songs, but if your eyes aren't truly open, you'll never be free to allow in what's out there."

BRITISH INVASION

"This is probably obvious, but all the British Invasion groups meant a lot to us. There's no denying that guys like Pete Townshend — whose Gibson SG with P90s hugely influenced me — Jimi Hendrix [*an American who became part of the London rock scene in 1966*] and Eric Clapton all impacted me deeply."

BEHIND THE SOLOS

VITO BRATTA

The reclusive guitarist discusses his classic WHITE LION solos, a poignant conversation with EDDIE VAN HALEN and how he wound up using JIMI HENDRIX'S Strat

50

BY ANDREW DALY

IT'S 3:05 P.M. ON A FRIDAY. I'M WAITING FOR A CALL from Vito Bratta. He's late. Five minutes late, to be exact. But considering it's taken years of knocking, followed by an additional three weeks of scheduling back and forth via email, to gain entry into the proverbial Casa di Vito... what's a few minutes more?

A few nervous sips of Johnny Walker Blue later, at around 3:10 p.m., my trusty iPhone 10XR buzzes with anticipation; I'd used that old iPhone for countless interviews prior, but this one is different. The number scrolling across the screen is one I didn't recognize. I mutter to myself, "That's gotta be Vito..." It is.

"Sorry I'm late, man. I was dialing the wrong number for the last 10 minutes," Bratta sheepishly says. "It's funny, though; I've got nothing to do. I'm here all the time. I care for my mother full time and only venture out for a few minutes daily to run to the grocery store."

The "here" Bratta refers to is the childhood home in Staten Island (one of New York City's five boroughs), where Bratta still resides. Since the end-days of White Lion — when Bratta retreated from the "biz" — the ever-reclusive guitarist has been seldom heard from. Still, many rumors regarding Bratta have cropped up. Some are true — at least, on the surface — while others are bastardized versions of his post-glam-metal life.

Of course, Bratta has earned all the grace that he desires. Far be it from me to be bothered by waiting a few extra minutes. After all, I'd waited this long to dig into the solos that made Bratta — with his imaginative pop arpeggiations and blues-based, yet Van Halen-inspired bouts of slippery tapping — famously adored.

Indeed, in the years that followed Bratta's exodus from our collective consciousness, talks of his exploits have unfurrowed in various directions. Some say he was the most inventive player to pick up a guitar in the Eighties. Others label him as nothing more than a clone of one Edward Van Halen. But Bratta isn't having any of that. He never did.

"That always bothered me," Bratta says. "I read all of it back in the Eighties. Guys will say they don't read people's words, but I did. I remember seeing it in magazines, and people would tell me, 'Oh, you sound and play just like Eddie.' At one point, it got under my skin enough that I called Eddie. I won't say all that Eddie told me specifically — I'll take that to my grave — but I will say that he told me, 'I love the way you play. We're a lot alike, but you're different. Remember that.'"

If we look beyond the surface, Bratta's words ring true; he was never a clone, a disciple, but not a clone: "I was 16 when I first heard Eddie play," Bratta says. "Even though I knew next to nothing about anything, I knew that the guy re-wrote the book on guitar. And who do you think bought that book? If you guessed me, you'd be right!"

And so, when we look back on Vito Bratta, sure, we hear a player into whom Eddie Van Halen carved a deep musical river of influence. But go on, dig deeper. You'll find a subtly blues-based maestro whose only aim was to chase perfection, with the knowledge that he'd never catch it.

"If we're gonna talk about my solos, I'll have to tell you my three triads of soloing," Bratta says. "I've carried this method my whole life, and it's never failed me. The first is that scales are not solos. Too many guys rely on scales for solos and end up using what I'll call the 'asshole scale.' See if you can find that on the metronome." [*Laughs*]

"The second is to always be accurate. I never met a player who liked what he did," Bratta says. "Even though I would play for 12 hours a day and practice until my hands bled, I still hated everything I ever recorded. But that didn't stop me from being accurate.

"And my last thing is that scales are a gift. The best songwriters know how to use scales so they aren't lazy or repetitive. You don't have to do crazy stunts or play fast to make a good song or be a good guitar player. Remember this: scales are a gift, don't abuse them."

It wasn't until a day or so later that the impact of my 120-minute call with Bratta hit me — I've revered the songs, desired his gear, coveted the technique and marveled at his blissfully dynamic solos. But what stuck out most was his humility. And that's when I realized what Eddie Van Halen meant when he told Bratta he was "different." As unfathomable as Bratta was as a player, he never took it for granted for a single day. It was that mindset that gave Bratta the Midas touch.

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES

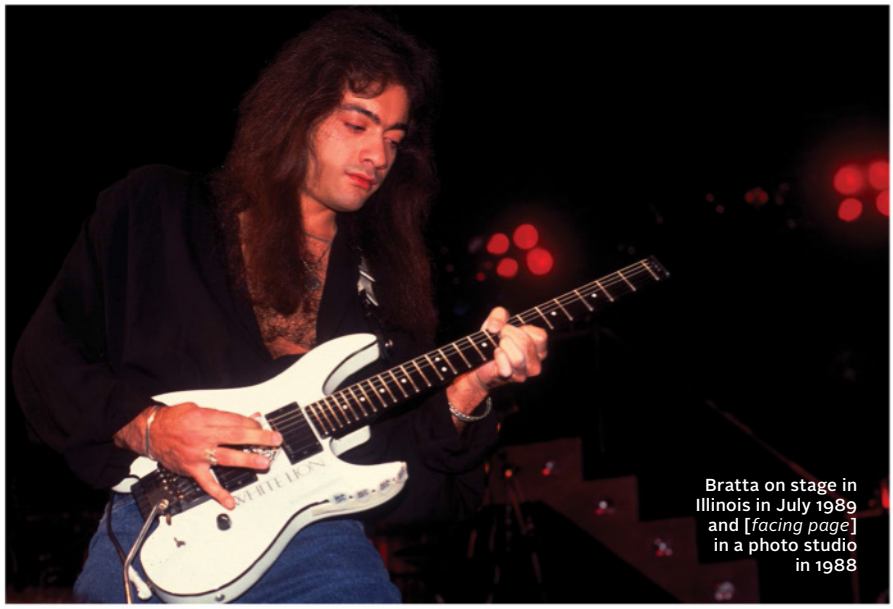
Vito Bratta with his Steinberger GM2S in May 1989

"People tell me all the time how good I was," Bratta says. "But it was never about that. I just loved to play guitar, and for most of my life, I've never been able to put it down. Things were different after my injury, but within the last year, I've relearned all my White Lion solos — which was fucking tough — and I went from only being able to play for a few minutes at a time with extreme pain to being able to play for two or three hours straight.

"I got tired of the business back then," Bratta says. "But rock is still where it begins for me. I love them, but I only venture off into classical and jazz when I get bored with the rock stuff. I'm thankful to be able to play and even more thankful to be talking with you today. After all these years, I'm glad someone still cares about what I did. I'm just happy to be remembered."

Before Kurt Cobain dismantled the citadel of virtuoso guitar, few — if any — did it better. Of course, we remember you, Vito. How could we not?

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES (LIVE) EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS (STUDIO)



Bratta on stage in Illinois in July 1989 and [*facing page*] in a photo studio in 1988

I first wanted to start with a couple of songs from *Fight to Survive* —

What a fucking disaster that record was. Can I tell you something about that record that most people probably don't know?

Of course. Let's hear it.

That whole album is scratch tracks. None of it is what it was supposed to be. I laid the scratch guitars down, and then the producer Peter [*Hauke*] told me, "OK, Vito, that's good for now. We'll have you come back in and finish the guitars when the rest of the album is done." So, I'm thinking, "OK... I guess I'll redo these and put the polish on after." See, I was a dumb kid. I knew nothing. I'd never been in a recording studio. And now, I'm in Germany with this bald guy yelling at me. I won't say I was scared, but I wasn't going to question him. Long story short, Mike [*Tramp*] finishes his vocals, and Peter tells me, "We're done. You can go home now." And I'm like, "What about the guitars?" Peter just looked at me and said, "Sorry. We ran out of money and time. We're going with what we've got." I was devastated. I couldn't believe a bunch of shitty scratch tracks would be my first record.

What can you tell me about the solo for "All the Fallen Men"?

Nothing. I don't remember shit. It was 40 years ago. Just kidding. [*Laughs*] I remember hating all the shitty power chords because they were scratch tracks. That was just a case of me playing whatever I felt then. There was no thought behind it beyond tearing it up because I thought I could do it for real later.

I assume it was the same for "All Burn in Hell."

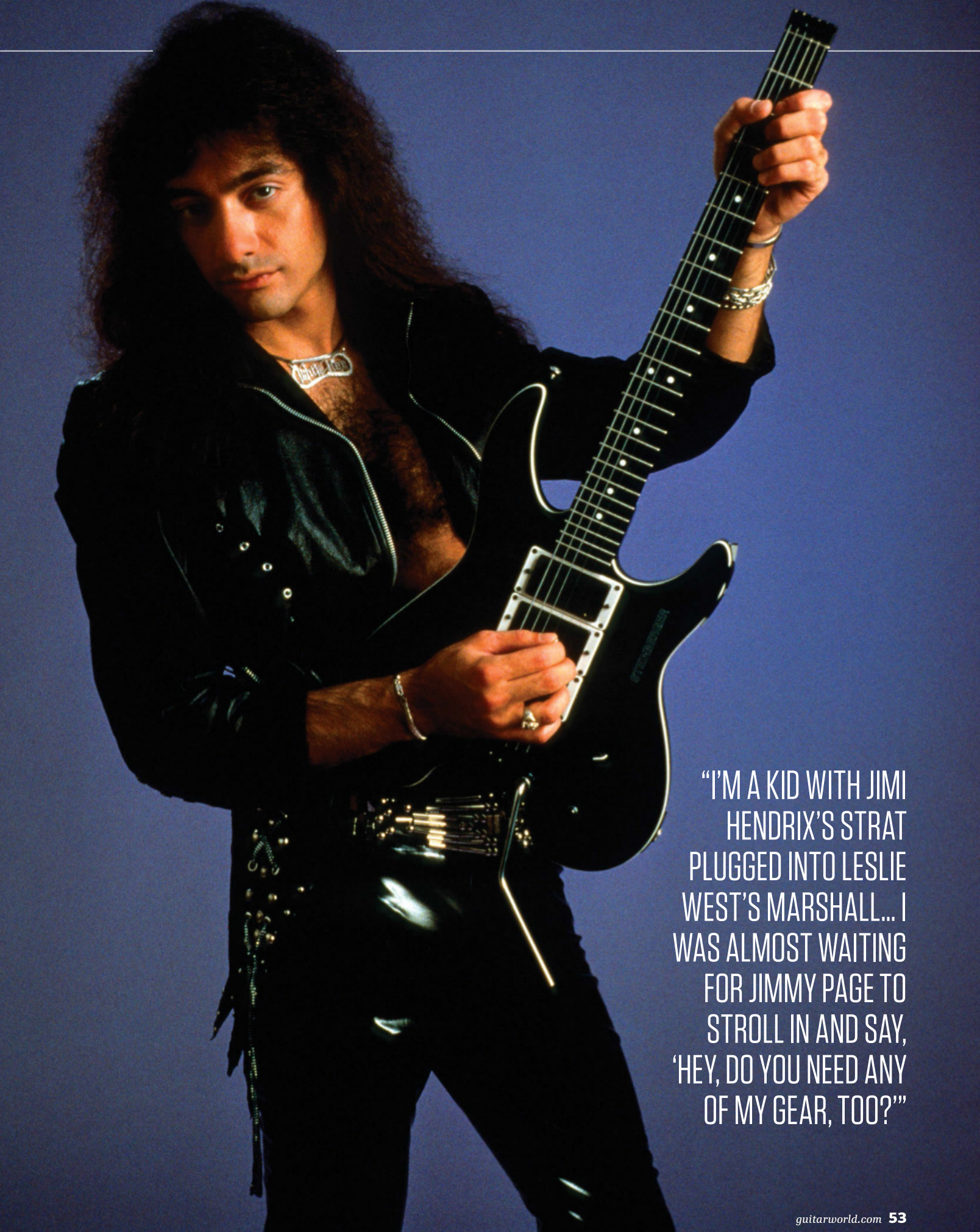
It was. You have to remember I had nothing going into *Fight to Survive*. White Lion hadn't been together for that long. There were no years of playing together to put things together in clubs. We formed the band in '83, and within months we were somewhere in Germany recording an album. I had maybe rehearsed whatever in someone's garage or basement, but nothing beyond that. So with that song, I just pressed "record" and let it rip. What's on there is me playing whatever I felt, having no idea that it would live on forever as what people would hear.

Do you remember what guitars and amps you used?

I know I had the '79 Strat that I installed a Seymour Duncan JB pickup on. And I had one of the original Floyd Roses installed on that guitar, too. And when I say it was "original," I mean it was a prototype. When Floyd Rose made those, Joe Perry got number one, and I got number two. As for the pedals, a chorus was, unfortunately, all over Fight to Survive. I later learned that Randy Rhoads would double and triple-track everything. I did that later, but at the time, I just relied on the chorus pedal. And the amps I used were old 100-watt Marshalls. I didn't want to worry about the amp blowing up, so I went with the biggest Marshall I could find.

Given what you'd been through recording *Fight to Survive*, how did you approach *Pride* from a soloing perspective?

When I got in there with the producer, Michael Wagener, he told me from the beginning, "Don't do what got you in trouble in Germany. You never know if you'll run out of time; play the solos the way they're supposed to be played the first time." That's



"I'M A KID WITH JIMI HENDRIX'S STRAT PLUGGED INTO LESLIE WEST'S MARSHALL... I WAS ALMOST WAITING FOR JIMMY PAGE TO STROLL IN AND SAY, 'HEY, DO YOU NEED ANY OF MY GEAR, TOO?'"

Bratta with White Lion's Mike Tramp at Alpine Valley, East Troy, Wisconsin, May 29, 1989

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES

when I started sweating. And Michael looked at me and said, "Vito, play the songs the way you'd play them live. Don't worry about the bottom falling out when you go into the solo; play the solo." So I did everything on *Pride* live and in one take.

Tell me about the solo for "Wait."

As far as the technicalities are concerned, I don't remember much. But I can visualize myself standing there and holding that same '79 Strat. By this time, I'd worn the frets off. And I was broke, which meant that thing was staying fretless. I remember Michael saying something about fucking with the levels, and then he had me plug into this small rack-mounted amp we called "The Chevy" because of the red paint job. This was not the type of amp I'd usually want to mess with, but he told me to plug in and play it as I would if it were live. So I did one pass; Michael stopped me, called me in and said, "Go home. You're done." I didn't believe him and demanded to listen back so I could listen back for mistakes. I looked for flubs or wrong notes, but there weren't any. I was shocked that Michael didn't want me to do it 20 times. That's when I learned that having the right mindset was all I needed.

How about "Lady of the Valley?"

I'm glad you brought that one up because it's a favorite of mine. I always loved Jimmy Page; he was my number one. You might not hear it in my playing at face value, but it's in there. I had the classic Jimmy Page alternation between acoustic and electric, which influenced the solo. If people had just left White Lion alone, "Lady of the Valley" is the type of music we would have made. The other stuff came about only when people convinced us we "needed a hit." But I didn't care then, so I said, "I wanna do it this way. What do I care?" I cared about later albums but didn't on the first two. So "Lady of the Valley" is an example of White Lion's original concept.

How did you approach "Hungry?"

To me, there's nothing special about "Hungry." I just played whatever and went for it. And when I listened back, I hated it. But I hated everything I did. That's just the way it was. I don't think the "Hungry" solo is as good as it's made out to be. If you want to talk about a good solo from *Pride*, I'd point you toward "All You Need is Rock 'n' Roll."

Fair enough. Tell me about that one!

Number one: I recorded the entire solo for that song with Jimi Hendrix's black Stratocaster.

How did that come about?

There's a keyboard player called Al Kooper, who played with everybody, including Hendrix. Hendrix gave Al Kooper his black Strat somewhere along the way, so he had it. Al was working with us in the studio on Pride and was listening to me practicing the "All You Need is Rock 'n' Roll" solo. I guess he realized I didn't have a neck pickup in my Strat, and suddenly, Al goes, "Hold on, Vito, let me get you something." He leaves, comes back and pulls out Jimi Hendrix's guitar. I knew what it was the second I saw it, and again, I'm just a kid, so I'm in awe of this thing. So Al goes, "Plug it in. Play it, Vito." Long story short, I used Hendrix's black Stratocaster to record the solo for "All You Need is Rock 'n' Roll." When I listen back to the record, I can hear the classic Hendrix sound all over that song.

Did you use the same Marshalls on *Pride*?

I was plugged into an old Marshall, but it wasn't the same one from Fight to Survive. But *Pride* was an old 100-watt Marshall, and you'll never guess whose it was. Go ahead, guess.

It would be too easy to guess Hendrix. I have no idea...

I used Leslie West's 100-watt Marshall. But not just any old Leslie West Marshall; it was his favorite. This was the same amp he used to record all those classic Mountain songs. So I'm a kid with Jimi Hendrix's Strat plugged into Leslie West's Marshall. I'm proud to say I still own that amp. But it was so crazy that I was almost waiting for Jimmy Page to stroll in and say, "Hey, do you need any of my gear, too?" It was just crazy. And in all honesty, I was too young to grasp it fully. Oh, and I guess you're wondering about pedals, right? I didn't use any. I just went with the Stratocasters plugged straight into a Marshall the whole way.

It doesn't sound like only a Stratocaster plugged into a Marshall on the *Big Game* record.

You're right. Between *Pride* and *Big Game*, White Lion went on a tour with Aerosmith playing arenas. And my lead singer, Mike, didn't want any guitars in his monitors. So, suddenly, these 100-watt Marshals — which I had three of — weren't cutting it because my cabinets were buried underneath the stage. I had to do something to counter that and went with a [*1,000-watt*] Carvin DCM 1000 Power Amp. I got used to that sound, and I ended up bringing that into the studio. Along with that came a new guitar, the white Steinberger GM2S. Like you said, that's an entirely different world from a Strat plugged into an old Marshall.

How did that manifest on "Little Fighter"?

I got the DCM dialed in to where it sounded a lot like my Marshalls. Still, some people can pick out the differences in the midrange. I read the comments that said I sounded different, and I thought, "Yeah... it does sound different, but it doesn't sound bad..." So I had that going on with "Little Fighter." And I remember that solo being one of those things where I needed to sit down and take a breath when I finished. I literally held my breath for the entire time I was playing it. It was technical and had a massive amount of definition. If I had to pick out one word to describe that solo, it would be "articulation." When I played my solos, I had to make sure every note was crystal clear, which made playing live a bitch. Going on stage in an arena where 20,000 people were screaming was like, "Guys, shut up. I can't hear what I'm playing. [*Laughs*]

Going into *Mane Attraction*, was it your goal to make a more heavy and mature-sounding record?

Honestly, no, not at all. I mean, it is a more mature record, but that was a by-product of getting better as songwriters. Beyond that was entirely accidental. I guess having a guy like Richie Zito producing helped with that, though. He was a very professional guy. Whereas Michael Wagener was more like one of the guys. Michael's attitude was, "Come on, go for it. What the fuck, pussy? Just go for it." If I broke a string in the middle of the solo, he would say, "So what? You're stopping over that?" But Richie had to be perfect. He still let me be me, but if I broke a string in the middle of the solo, Richie would say, "Let's redo it." Whereas Michael would say, "Leave it in. It's a great solo. Leave it alone." We had been flying by the seat of our pants, and Richie brought some professionalism to the table.

Did you go back to the Stratocaster and Marshall for *Mane Attraction*?

I think *Mane Attraction* was the same as *Big Game*. I remember using some ESPs occasionally, but it was a lot of Steinberger guitars. I didn't have the '79 Strat in my arsenal anymore. That guitar had gotten me through the club days and all my youth. I learned to play on that guitar. I became me on that guitar. I used it all through *Fight to Survive* and *Pride*, and after I finished the last song on *Pride*, I took the '79 Strat, laid it in its case and flipped the lid shut. And me and Michael were talking, and suddenly, I heard a loud "ping," and I knew right away... the Strat was done. I opened the case and found that the bridge posts that held the Floyd Rose to the guitar had collapsed entirely through the wood and into the JB pickup. I thought the guitar was ruined, so I sent it home. That's part of the reason I went to Steinberger and ESP. So I would say most of *Mane Attraction* was recorded with

Bratta in Munich in 1988. "I remember using some ESPs occasionally, but it was a lot of Steinberger guitars," he says

DPA PICTURE ALLIANCE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

my white Steinberger.

You seemed to eschew pedals after White Lion's first record. Why?

Aside from the first record — which I hated — I've never used effect pedals. Not ever. I didn't use a single pedal on *Mane Attraction*, except for a wah on one song, but I can't recall which. Other than that, I don't remember using them ever. Well, I shouldn't say that — I'm sure one of my guitar techs put a reverb or something out there when we played live, but for the most part, after that experience of having *Fight to Survive* drenched by that chorus pedal, I never wanted to use pedals again. They were always a pain in the ass with the cords coming out and were generally annoying.

Knowing what I know now regarding the first record, I can see why you chose to re-record "Broken Heart."

You'd think that, but honestly, it goes beyond me hating the scratch guitars on *Fight to Survive*. The record company felt that "Broken Heart" could be a hit. So they wanted us to do it again, and yeah, given what I went through the first time, I was happy about that.

How did you approach the solo the second time around?

I had to try and wash away what I knew about the first version, so I kept it simple. I just plugged in and played a solo that felt good. I did compose something, but what I mean is that I tried not to overthink the whole thing. And the truth is, if you want to get Richie Zito pissed the fuck off, all you have to do is come into the studio unprepared. When you're in a $1,500-an-hour studio, and you're getting ready to do a solo, and you tell Richie, "Give me a few takes," he's going to rip your head off. So I always had something ready, but unlike *Pride* and *Big Game*, I adopted the mindset: "This doesn't have to be perfection." I wanted the emotion to come out. So I took what I'd prepared, worked off it and then played off the cuff.

Was the approach the same for "Warsong?"

That was as simple as could be. Richie approached me and said, "Vito, we're doing guitars tomorrow. Be there." And I came in, laid it down in one take, and then we went to dinner. [*Laughs*] I never did any solo in my career in more than one take. The only exception to that rule would be if something stupid happened, like a glitch with the equipment. Otherwise, I'd plug in and put myself on autopilot. There were a lot of situations where I did half the album or almost the whole album in one day, and then we just went out for dinner. I heard the stories of other guitar players out in California that would waste time doing 25 takes and then piece them together with the best parts. I thought that was total bullshit. So every solo you hear is me playing straight in one pass, start to finish. Nobody was going to create my solo from a bunch of parts. No way.

The last one I wanted to hit on is "Blue Monday," which is an outlier to most of your work with White Lion. Where did that originate?

I had a friendly relationship with the girl who was running Alpine Valley. We were just friends, and we used to hang out up there when White Lion came through. One day, she told me Stevie Ray Vaughan was playing and that I should come through. So I come down, and I'm hanging out in the front row with Zakk Wylde. We had the entire front row to ourselves and put our feet on the stage. And she kept telling me, "Vito, why don't you and Zakk get up on stage for the final jam?" I was like, "No, I can't. I don't want to..." Well, of course, Stevie died that night, and I was just devastated. So when it came time to do *Mane Attraction*, I said, "I'm gonna do a tribute to Stevie," and that ended up being "Blue Monday." I said, "I'm not gonna go off on this song. I'm gonna play how I feel." It was an emotional time and an emotional song, so I wasn't gonna use it as a vehicle to show off. It would no longer have been a tribute if I had done that. I gave it all I had for one take. It was one shot, and I nailed it.

Aside from what we've discussed, is there one solo you feel stands out most from your career with White Lion?

Like I said before, I hated everything back then. But I've never met a guitar player who liked anything they've recorded, so I don't think I'm being too tough on myself. But my favorite solo comes off the *Big Game* record from "Baby Be Mine." It was a rare instance that I thought the solo came out great when I listened back. It freaked me out how it came out because it sounded like I used a delay unit, but I didn't. I just overdubbed it a million times. I did the solo, and I remember them saying, "OK, we're gonna use the machine to make it sound different," I was like, "Screw that." And I went into the studio on an off day and recorded all these delays myself. All the delays did different things; some bent up instead of bending down. So it's not a delay machine. It's different guitar parts added in by me afterward. It came out so good, and for once, I loved it. GW

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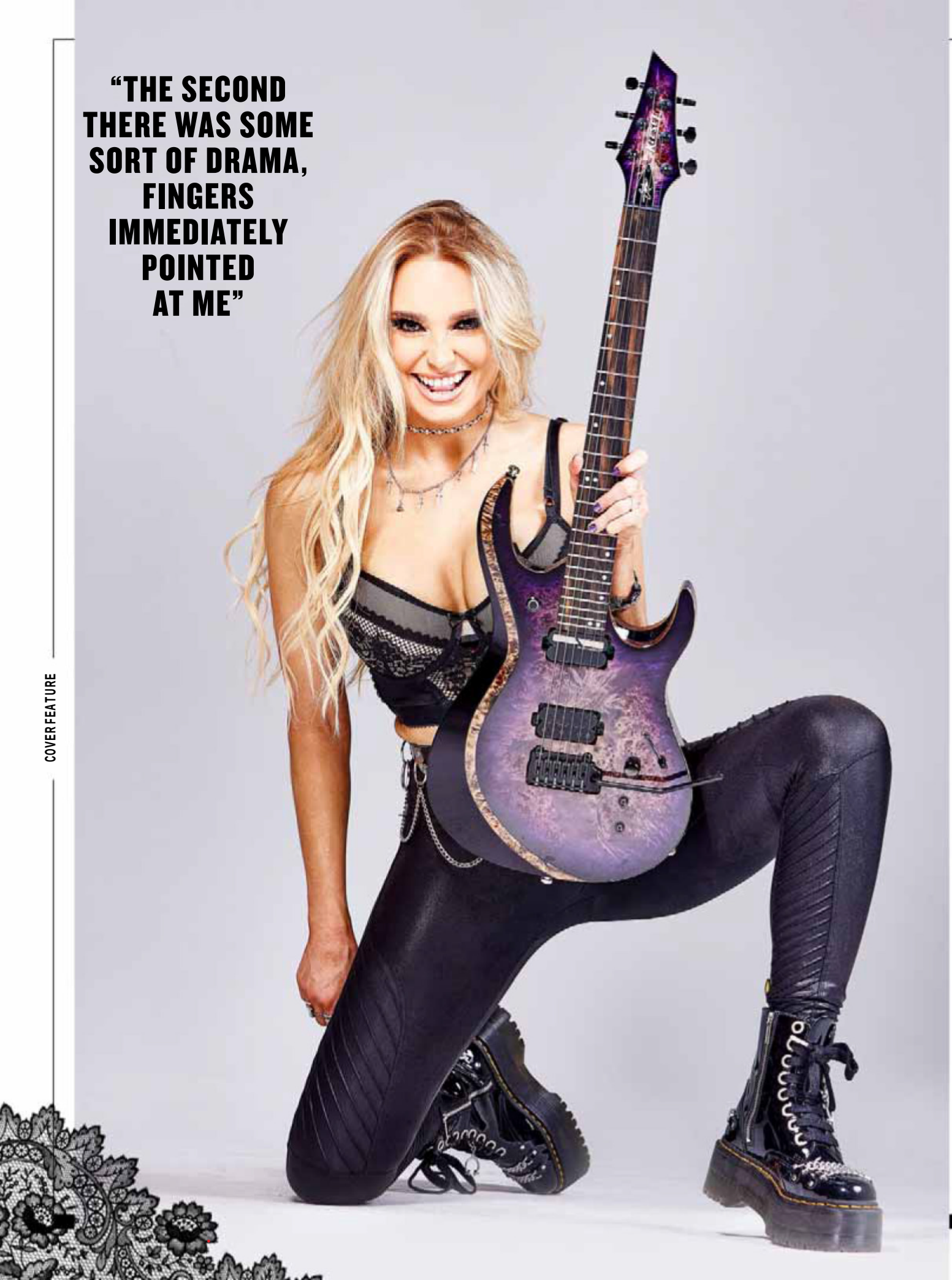
SOPHIE LLOYD DISCUSSES THE JOYS — AND THE VERY PUBLIC PITFALLS — OF HER WILD TRAJECTORY FROM POPULAR ONLINE CREATOR TO MACHINE GUN KELLY'S ARENA-ROCKING SECRET WEAPON

WELCOME TO THE MACHINE

WORDS BY
JOE BOSSO

PHOTOS BY
JEN ROSENSTEIN

“THE SECOND THERE WAS SOME SORT OF DRAMA, FINGERS IMMEDIATELY POINTED AT ME”



EVERYTHING WAS GOING SO WELL

for Sophie Lloyd. The 27-year-old British guitarist had recently completed her first tours of the U.S. and Europe as part of rap-rocker Machine Gun Kelly's band. It was a heady time for Lloyd, who, despite her sizable following on YouTube and Instagram, had previously only played club and pub gigs around the U.K. before signing on for Kelly's Mainstream Sellout tour in the spring of 2022. Now she was playing big-time venues — Madison Square Garden, Wembley Arena, even the odd stadium or two — and she was "going down a smash."

And then it all seemed to go a bit wonky. In February of this year, Lloyd's name was suddenly in headlines throughout the media, but for reasons that had nothing to do with her prodigious shredding skills. It all started when Kelly's fiancée, actress Megan Fox, sparked online rumors of a split, which prompted one fan to write, "He probably got with Sophie" on Fox's Instagram page. And that's all it took. In a flash, Lloyd was clickbait fodder, with tabloid sites branding her "the other woman." The speculation was quickly squashed by Lloyd's management, and even Fox rushed to the guitarist's defense, denying any kind of cheating scandal and writing on Instagram, "Sophie, you are insanely talented. Welcome to Hollywood. Your first unwarranted PR disaster."

The brouhaha has since died down, and Lloyd can laugh about it now — somewhat. "It was a crazy time for me to be on the inside of all the media stuff," she says. "Obviously, we all know the truth — it was complete bullshit — but it was wild to see this thing spread so fast and how everybody jumped on the bandwagon."

Just as quickly, though, she pivots to a larger issue, the grim and, sadly, predictable stigma facing musicians who just so happen to be female. "What I found especially upsetting was, the second there was some sort of drama, fingers immediately pointed at me," she says. "It was like, 'Oh, the girl musician — of course she's at the root of it.' Nobody would have said shit if I were the new dude in the band; they wouldn't have suspected a thing. It was a bit unfortunate to be exposed to the toxicity of the media."

If there was any kind of silver lining to the episode, Lloyd can point to a dramatic uptick on her own social media accounts. "I got 20,000 more Instagram followers," she says. "People have been saying such nice things about my playing, so that's a plus, I guess."

Lloyd's online audience is, indeed, impressive: On YouTube, she boasts close to 900,000 subscribers, and, as of this writing, her Instagram followers number just over 800,000. Since she began posting guitar-centric covers of her favorite songs (by everyone from Green Day to Iron Maiden), she's racked up tens of millions of views and has dazzled ax enthusiasts with her breathtaking chops; from melodic legato soloing to turbo-charged tapping, she's got it all. Building on her success, Lloyd recently began re-imaging classic rock tunes in a series of "shred" videos in which she performs an entire track — vocal melodies and solos — in a blistering metal fashion. (Her operatic "shred" rendition of Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb," in which she balances thoughtful bluesy lyricism with hypersonic, gonzo soloing, has already been viewed close to five million times.)

Sophie Lloyd photographed in L.A. in May with a Kiesel Sophie Lloyd Signature Series guitar. "I love Kiesel's Aries shape, so I knew I wanted something similar to that," she says

She produces the videos along with her partner, Christopher Painter, who also plays drums on the clips. "I'll do guitars and bass, and then we'll listen to all the layers," she says. "It teaches me a lot about composition. In terms of playing, I study the guitarists and try to get inside what they do. Like when I did 'Comfortably Numb,' I tried to figure out David Gilmour's scales and tones. That was a cool one because I learned how you can sound powerful even if you're not shredding over everything; you sit back and let the music speak. It's the same thing with the 'Stairway to Heaven' video I'm doing. You speak through just a few notes; it's all about your vibrato and phrasing."

Lloyd's stunning trajectory from successful online creator to high-level arena rocker might cause one to assume that it was all the result of a carefully crafted plan — a notion she quickly rejects. "I just kind of wing it," she says with a laugh. "The truth is, I never set out to be an online content creator. I joined YouTube back in the day because there wasn't a real music scene where I grew up. I had to follow a more unconventional path. I didn't plan to be a touring musician, either; in fact, I like staying at home and being with my family. But the Machine Gun Kelly opportunity came to me, I ended up doing it, and I discovered I really enjoy it. I just love making music, and I'm open to whatever exciting thing comes my way."

SOPHIE LLOYD: 10 RECORDS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Joe Satriani, *Surfing with the Alien*

"This was one of the first instrumental guitar albums I ever heard. I loved the way Joe can tell a story through his music and really take you on a journey. I spent a lot of time studying the songs on this album trying to perfect techniques he used and understand his writing style."

Avenged Sevenfold, *City of Evil*

"This is one of those albums that makes me smile and gets me so hyped every time I listen to it. I feel like this album really helped me with my playing as I would literally sit there all night and learn these songs back to front."

The Smiths, *Rank*

"Morrissey is one of greatest songwriters ever, especially when combined with Johnny Marr's guitar playing. What an incredible mix. The album takes you on a journey of raw emotion."

Slash, *Slash*

"This album inspired me to do my upcoming collab record. It's really cool seeing a guitarist pull together a group of vocalists from different genres to make an amazing album."

Pantera, *Cowboys from Hell*

"I love how heavy and primal this album is. Dimebag is one of my biggest inspirations for lead guitar. He always knew how to think outside the box and elevate a song with his soloing."

The Smiths' Morrissey [*left*] and Johnny Marr at the Royal Albert Hall in London, April 5, 1985

Up till now, the only original music Lloyd has released has been instrumental — most notably, there was her debut EP, *Delusions*, issued in 2018. Recently, she began releasing singles from her upcoming full-length album, *Imposter Syndrome*, that will include an array of guest vocalists. First up there was "Do or Die," a blitzing shred-o-rama featuring Inglorious frontman Nathan James [*see lesson feature*]. Next up was the pile-driving "Fall of Man," in which Trivium's Matt Heafy — no slouch on the guitar himself — stepped back to allow for Lloyd's commanding leads. That track was soon followed by "Hanging On," a swaggering stomper on which the guitarist teamed up with Canadian singer Lauren Babic. Lloyd is still completing work on the album (she just wrapped another raucous cut, "Let It Hurt," with Black Stone Cherry's Chris Robertson as well as "Lost," an instrumental tune with fellow internet guitar star Cole Rolland), and she promises it will be a humdinger.

"I always said this album was going to be me paying homage to my 15-year-old self," she says. "This is an album I wrote for that girl. I'm so fortunate to work with

I ALWAYS SAID THIS ALBUM WAS GOING TO BE ME PAYING HOMAGE TO MY 15-YEAR-OLD SELF. THIS IS AN ALBUM I WROTE FOR THAT GIRL"

"It's interesting that I've been able to enter touring at such a high level," Lloyd says. "People always say, 'You haven't paid your dues,' but I feel as though I've done that in a different way"

PHIL DENT/REDFERNS (SMITHS)

all of the amazing singers on the record, and I can honestly say I've been listening to them for years. I can't tell you how gratifying it's been — I'd write the songs, and then we'd send them off and hear back from the singers. They were like, 'Yeah, I really dig this. I'm up for it.' It's all turned out better than I could have imagined."

From what I understand, you started on the guitar as a child. Do you remember the moment when you knew you wanted to play?

This is going to sound so embarrassing. It was actually when I watched *SpongeBob SquarePants*. [*Laughs*] It's a great show. I saw the movie — they do a version of Twisted Sister's "I Wanna Rock," but SpongeBob sings, "I'm a goofy goober!" They had the big band, and I thought it looked so incredible. I said, "Wow, I wanna do that!"

SpongeBob rocked quite a bit. In one episode, he was a singer and Patrick played guitar. They rocked a stadium, and they had lights and lasers...

[*Laughs*] Yeah, exactly! That was the start. Plus, my dad

Alice in Chains, *Dirt*

"This album really influenced my rhythm playing. It was one of my first introductions into grunge music. It's just so raw. I love the heavy riffs and odd time signatures."

Van Halen, *Van Halen*

"I think most guitarists would agree that this album revolutionized guitar. The techniques and style Eddie brought to the table were unmatched. He was and continues to be an inspiration to so many people."

Twenty One Pilots, *Blurry Face*

"Although it's pretty light on guitar, the songs on this album really spoke to me and helped me through some tough times. The band is very daring and unafraid to break rules. The music is full of tempo and time changes, and sometimes it switches genres in the same song. Very inspiring."

Iron Maiden, *Rock in Rio*

"It's rare that a live album can top the original studio recordings, but this record captures all the energy of a Maiden show. You can close your eyes and feel like you're there. These versions take their already incredible songs to new levels. It's such a magical experience listening to this album."

Machine Gun Kelly, *Mainstream Sellout*

"If we're talking about albums that changed my life, I have to include this one. When I first heard 'Emo Girl' on the radio while visiting the U.S. last January, I never thought I'd be playing it at a sold-out stadium just a few months later."

— Joe Bosso

loved music, and he had all the classic rock around the house — Led Zeppelin, Joe Bonamassa, Rory Gallagher, all of these amazing blues guitarists. He didn't play guitar, but because of him I was surrounded by music.

I took a few classical guitar lessons when I was 10 or so, but I was like, "Nah." Then I got an electric guitar — a Yamaha Pacifica — and I was like, "This is more like it." I got really into it. It was the classic sob story in school — I was a bit of an outcast and didn't make friends. The guitar was my release and my escape. I found so much comfort from playing rock music. I'd come home from school and play for five or six hours.

What kinds of songs were you playing?
One of the first songs was "Wild Thing." I did a thing called Rock Masters with Mike Hurst — he played guitar for Dusty Springfield. He's like a second grandpa to me. I learned a lot from him. I had a bit of a natural feel for the guitar, but I also loved songwriting. Once I got chords nailed down, it unlocked the writing thing in me. Then I got more into the technical side, so I played along with Iron Maiden, Metallica, Avenged Sevenfold. I got it all down quite quickly. The first full solo I learned was "Stairway to Heaven."

Not bad.
Yeah. My dad said that if I learned it, he would buy me a PRS Mark Tremonti signature guitar. I did learn it, and he made good on that promise. [*Laughs*] That was one of the first videos I put up on Facebook. I was, like, 14 or something. I watched it the other day because I'm writing a "shred" version of it. I enjoyed the challenge of learning solos. I didn't get hung up on the patterns or shapes; I thought of everything quite logically, really. I just had an ear for it.

You were in your mid-teens by this point, right?
Yeah, I was about 16.

Were you already thinking of playing guitar as a career?
Well, no. It felt like a distant dream. Nobody around me played, and I didn't know anybody in the music industry. In the real world, I felt isolated. At school, I said, "I want to learn music at university," and they were like, "No." I got a scholarship to study forensic science at university — I was a bit of a nerd. A week before I was going to go, I said, "I really want to give this music thing a go." Luckily, my parents were supportive, and I got into a music university in London.

At this point, which guitarists were you really into?
Joe Satriani. *Surfing with the Alien* was a record I wanted to learn from start to finish. Angel Vivaldi was another one; he's a good friend of mine now. I also loved Andy James, Synyster Gates and, of course, Slash. I really delved into them. At uni, I discovered Eddie Van Halen and went wild on him.

You graduated from the British and Irish Modern Music Institute. Overall, was it a good experience?
I have mixed opinions about music university. Ultimately, it was the right decision to go because of the people I met, but overall they tried to force me to be a session guitarist and be a carbon copy of everybody else. After a year, I realized I hadn't played a song that I really loved. I learned gypsy jazz and other things, but that wasn't where my heart was. I came home from uni and learned this emo song I liked, and it was then that I said, "I need to take my creativity and mold it into something I enjoy." That's when I started writing my first EP, *Delusions*.

Before that, you started making your own videos.
That's right.

How long did it take you to feel comfortable on camera?
A while. Do you ever feel 100 percent comfortable with a camera on you? [*Laughs*] It's good to look back at the videos and see the progress, which is why I started doing them in the first place. I didn't know you could make money on YouTube. One of the first videos I made was "Nightmare" by Avenged Sevenfold. Cut to last year and I'm sitting watching it with [*bassist*] Johnny Christ from the band. We had a big laugh about it. [*Laughs*] Some of the videos are a little cringey, but that's OK. I'm not going to delete the older ones. I think it's important to have reference points.

How did you learn about guitars and gear? Trial and error?
I watched a lot of videos on YouTube. I loved PRS for a long while, but then Rob Caggiano from Volbeat introduced me to Kiesel and I got into them. They're very customizable, which I quite like. It was a similar thing with pedals and amps. I played a Diezel VH4 for a while; working in a studio really gave me an idea of what sounds I liked. Doing my videos, I started getting more into guitar software; I've been using the [*Neural DSP*] Archetype: Nolly. A lot of it's just been from doing research, looking around online and talking to people.

I know you said you're not big on planning, but what do you think you'd be doing if the Machine Gun Kelly gig hadn't come up?
Well, I do a lot of solo stuff, and we're doing the album at the moment. I wanted to do some live shows with my

JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC (MAY/GAGA)

"I WAS A BIT OF AN OUTCAST AND DIDN'T MAKE FRIENDS. THE GUITAR WAS MY RELEASE AND MY ESCAPE"

Lady Gaga and Queen's Brian May at the MTV Video Music Awards in Los Angeles, August 28, 2011

POP GOES THE ROCKER

10 DIEHARD ROCK 'N' BLUES GUITARISTS WHO — FOR AT LEAST A LITTLE WHILE, ANYWAY — BOARDED THE POP TRAIN

BY ANDREW DALY

THE MELDING OF genres is always a tricky bit of fun. And when it comes to rock and pop, no two genres seem to pair better. To that end, ever since Michael Jackson solicited Eddie Van Halen's and Steve Lukather's services for *Thriller* (1982), blazing ax-slingers stepping into the world of bubbly pop has become nothing short of commonplace.

While the idea is no longer novel, in the present day, many six-string heroes continue to lend their licks to various icons of pop music. Be it the G.O.A.T., Eddie Van Halen, eternal M.V.P. Nuno Bettencourt, perpetual hurricane in motion Nita Strauss or the effervescent new kid on the block, Sophie Lloyd, it seems these two worlds shall continue to collide. With that in mind, here's a handy guide to 10 rock guitarists who went pop.

EDDIE VAN HALEN/STEVE LUKATHER WITH MICHAEL JACKSON

Michael Jackson's *Thriller* might have come out 41 years ago, but it still seems as fresh as it did in 1982. And that's partly due to the scintillating solo one Edward Van Halen provided and the additional riffage that Toto six-stringer Steve Lukather (who also played bass) laid down for "Beat

partner and different vocalists. That's sort of what we're doing. I was in a smaller local band for a few years — Marisa and the Moths. They were sort of a grungy rock band with some shred solos. We did club and pub gigs around the U.K. There weren't big crowds, but I had a great time playing with them, and I learned so much. I left the band during quarantine. I just wanted to push my own music.

How did the Machine Gun Kelly gig come about? Did he see you online and reach out to you?
It was the drummer's dad who found me, actually. Then Kels reached out and we had a FaceTime. We vibed and all went well. I sent over a video compilation of me performing live. This was only a few weeks before they had to go on tour; they had to make a decision quickly. I'm grateful that they kind of took a chance on me. I didn't have to do an audition or anything.

You just showed up to a rehearsal in the States, and that was it?
Yeah, pretty much. They sent me over songs to learn, and I spent a lot of time going over them and making notes. I felt prepared. The guys were lovely and made me feel welcome as soon as I walked in. Kels wasn't there on the first few days, so that was a bit of pressure off. The first day was quite stressful, though, because it was such a different environment for me — there was this massive crew and everything. I had to snap out of my imposter syndrome and be like, "No, it's OK. You do belong here. You deserve this."

All right, hold on. This phrase "imposter syndrome" almost implies you're not good enough. Do you actually feel that way?
Well, the imposter syndrome is a thing. It's a phenomenon a lot of people experience in any field; not just music, but you basically feel like you're an imposter. You don't deserve to be where you are, and at any moment people will uncover you for what you are. I feel like I've broken out of that now. I proved to myself, like, "Yeah, you're here for a reason. You're good enough."

Were you a fan of Machine Gun Kelly's music before this whole thing happened?
Yeah. I'd heard some of his songs, but not that many. He's not as big in the U.K. as he is elsewhere. He had some good songs with Yungblud and Halsey — I knew him through a lot of his collaborations.

Was it immediately understood that you would have some musical leeway in the band?
Yeah, he said from the beginning that he's super open. He loves the live experience and the idea of changing things around. He loves showcasing the talent of his bands because the bands are so talented. The other guitarist I play with, Justin Lyons, is one of the most amazing guitarists I've ever seen. Kels wants to give everybody a chance to shine. He always likes to say. "We're Machine Gun Kelly together." It's just really nice. I know a lot of people make comments: "Oh, they're not talented, blah blah blah. They're not good." But if you could be in the room with us, you'd be amazed at the talent.

He's one of those artists — people either love him, or they don't. He definitely has his detractors.
He divides people. But I think that's almost a sign of a good artist — he makes people feel something. He makes them feel and think deeply. He gets them talking.

It's a guitar-heavy show, which might surprise some people. You get a chance to do a big solo.
I do. I kind of play the same thing every night just because there's a structure — we've got a click track so we know exactly the beats we're going to hit. Occasionally, I'll do something different if I'm feeling fancy. I think I'm going to change the solos for the European tour coming up.

Going from playing to small crowds to amphitheaters and arenas must have been quite an adjustment. Were you scared?
It was the ultimate challenge, and I had to sort of fight through my demons and get on with it. I practiced so much before that first gig. I had built it up that I'd be nervous. I thought it would be really nerve-racking, but the moment I stepped on stage, everything melted away and it felt like I was meant to be there. I saw all the faces and the signs and everything. I was surprised at how I took to it. I love watching everybody get crazy. The band would jump off shit, so I started doing some stunts as well. It's been fun.

You've been previewing cuts from your album while you record. You were a big Trivium fan growing up. What was it like working with Matt Heafy?
Oh, he's so nice. It was honestly incredible. Everyone on this album has just been so nice as well. Yeah, Matt Heafy was crazy 'cause I was such a big fan. There's a picture of me taken on the first day of recording my *Delusions* album in a homemade Trivium T-shirt. It feels kind of full circle that I get to work with him. And it was fun to go to Florida and film the video with him. He got the vision kind of straight away. Also, we recorded the track over Twitch, so that was quite interesting. I feel like it's a modern way to record a song because we got that immediate feedback from fans about what they liked, what they didn't like, if the lyric was good or if it was bad. He was like, "Should I redo that scream? Was that, like, shit?" It was cool to have that kind of live feedback. there while he was writing. So yeah, that was a really fun way to do it.

Why didn't Matt play guitar on the track?
We wrote the full instrumental before sending it to him. I think Matt was up for trying something a bit different. It was the first collab he'd done without his guitar. It really allowed him to showcase his voice. But I'd love to one day do another song with both of us playing on it.

"Let It Hurt" with Chris Robertson is quite strong. Of everything I've heard, the riffs are killer. Do those come easily to you?
I love writing riffs — they're such a big part of constructing a song. With a lot of these songs, we'd have a vocalist in mind, so I'd sit down and write. I'd listen to a lot of music and tinker around, maybe flip it backward and then change out some of the chords. I just really enjoy building songs from start to finish.

Are you thinking of forming a band with one dedicated singer?
That's what we're trying to think about: "How do we tour this?" We've got a few ideas. We're not sure whether we want to get a full-time vocalist — well, maybe. I guess it's just about finding a vocalist

It." With a riff as rocking as it gets and a typically tap-happy solo, "Beat It" was a crossover hit that catapulted Jackson to unprecedented success. "Beat It" was so successful that Jackson would go on to follow its formula repeatedly as he moved ahead.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN WITH DAVID BOWIE

On the surface, a gritty bluesman such as Stevie Ray Vaughan seemed oddly paired with a glam rocker steeped in pomp and circumstance like David Bowie. But then again, Bowie had worked with iconic guitarists before (including Mick Ronson), so perhaps Vaughan's searing solo on 1983's "Let's Dance" isn't so obtuse after all. In truth, Vaughan laid down the solo for "Let's Dance" in 1982 before he reached iconic levels of blues rockerdom. And so, it could be said that Bowie was early to the party when it came to Vaughan, seeing something in the Texas-born hero that others hadn't... yet.

JEFF BECK WITH TINA TURNER

It's been said that no guitarists managed to elicit sounds from his curio as Jeff Beck did. Sure, he could play a mean blues, and surely he could rock with any of his contemporaries, and indeed, he could out-shred any young buck who cropped up. For those reasons and about a million more, Beck's pairing with soul icon Tina Turner for 1984's "Private Dancer" was nothing short of sublime. Just when you thought Beck would zag right, he zigged left, spewing slick licks and memorable guitarism across multiple genres for all to behold.

JENNIFER BATTEN WITH MICHAEL JACKSON

We know Michael Jackson had a thing for silky smooth fretwork, and to be sure, he collaborated with plenty of well-known gunslingers in his day. To that end, Jackson invited guitarists of all shapes and sizes into the studio while recording his albums. But while on tour, having a cast of all-stars on hand for nightly performances wasn't realistic. And so, Jackson knew he needed to find someone capable of carrying the varying degrees of shreddery laid forth on his records, leading to the hiring of Jennifer Batten in 1987. Jackson found his live muse in Batten, and she hung around for more than a decade. Oddly, she never appeared on any of his studio records.

SLASH WITH MICHAEL JACKSON

Somewhere along the way, Guns N' Roses guitarist Slash and the King of Pop must have formed an unlikely friendship because they worked together plenty in the Nineties. The first instance was on 1991's *Dangerous*, where Slash pummeled his way through the solo heard on "Give It to Me." A few years later, Slash appeared on "D.S." from 1995's *HIStory: Past, Present, and Future: Book I*. And once more on "Morphine," from the 1997 collection *Blood on the Dancefloor: HIStory in the Mix*. Of all the various guitar-related collaborations, Jackson's studio partnership with Slash was the only one that could be seen as ongoing. There seemed to be something about Slash's bluesy licks that Jackson couldn't get enough of.

MONTE PITTMAN WITH MADONNA

For those leaning toward metal, Monte Pittman is known as Prong's demonstrative former lead guitarist. Metal exploits aside, with a Jarell MPS in hand, Pittman has been the main

[*from left*] Machine Gun Kelly, Sophie Lloyd and Justin Lyons perform in Scottsdale, Arizona, February 11, 2023. "Justin Lyons is one of the most amazing guitarists I've ever seen," Lloyd says

that fits you and inspires you. We might try something where we have big screens and we get vocalists to record a performance. The violinist Lindsey Sterling does that. Visually, it's pretty amazing.

Are you at liberty to talk about how long you plan to stay with Machine Gun Kelly?

I'm not really sure. I really enjoy working with him and touring with him. We'll sort of see what direction he wants to go in as well. I think he wants to go more into the rap side of things again, so it's sort of seeing where I'll fit into that. I'm passionate about my solo career, of course. I'm taking each day as it comes, taking whatever adventures I can get.

Let's talk about your guitar, particularly your signature model from Kiesel.

Yeah, I can talk about it now because it will be out soon. I wanted my Kiesel signature to be a shred guitar. It's got a Sustaniac, which I first saw on Manson guitars. Matt Bellamy uses them, and they make just crazy noises. I wanted to sort of adapt it so you could do it on a shred guitar. It's got a very thin walnut neck with a purple heart stripe, but it can be customized for the number of stripes. We've got the royal ebony fingerboards, which gives you quite a warm round tone. And we use black limba for the body, which has similar tonal characteristics to mahogany, but it's way lighter. The guitar is super light, and you can swing it — I like to do that on stage. It comes in purple, but people will be able to choose their own colors.

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

I've got everything where I want it on this guitar. I love Kiesel's Aries guitar shape, so I knew I wanted something similar to that. And being a girl, well, you have to think a little bit about the boob placement. Some guitars don't fit as well under there.

That's important.
[*Laughs*] Yeah. You can buy it without the Sustaniac and whammy bar if you don't want to go super crazy.

What about amps?
I'm using Blackstar a lot. They're a great amp company. I'm still using my Diezel for tones, but I also use the Neural Archetype. When I'm out with MGK, we use Kempers; they're very convenient for flying overseas and stuff. I'm exploring a lot of different amps. We've used the EVH 5150 on the album. I absolutely love the sound of that. I'm not sold on any particular amp.

Do you use a lot of pedals, or is it a lot of software?
There's pedals, but we are using the Neural Quad Cortex. It's cool because it's got the pedals built in. I still have a kind of pedalboard, but I don't use much other than some reverb. I love the TC Electronic Hall of Fame Reverb and some delay. I don't use a massive amount of crazy effects.

Do you feel like you're part of a revolution, going from an online presence into a major band situation?
I guess so, but I don't know. I skipped a few steps, I guess. For me, it's been both a blessing and a curse. If I grew up in an area with a music scene and a lot of bands, I would have taken advantage of that. It's interesting that I've been able to enter touring at such a high level. People always say, "You haven't paid your dues," but I feel as though I've done that in a different way.

I'm not the first person to do this by any means. But I think it's cool that my journey has been documented. I think we're definitely going to see a lot more of that, especially with TikTok and stuff. I was always worried before because this never seemed like a viable career to me. I didn't know anybody in the music industry. I didn't have anywhere I could fit. If I didn't have this online thing, I don't know how things could have unfolded. I think it's amazing that social media can open up all of these doors for people and allow other people to see them.

At the same time, things get oversaturated and there's obviously the downside to that, but overall it's a new direction for music, and I think we all just kind of need to adapt to it. There's so much amazing music, and people are doing incredible things. I think it's really exciting. GW

guitar-related squeeze of Madonna since 2001. In the 22 years since, Pittman has streaked across the globe with the Queen of Pop while appearing on albums such as 2005's *Confessions on a Dance Floor* and 2008's *Hard Candy*. Capable of laying back and covering Madonna's Eighties catalog with gentle nuance, Pittman can more than step into the limelight and match the veteran pop vocalist's energy pound for pound.

NUNO BETTENCOURT WITH RHIANNA

Nuno Bettencourt's work with Rihanna on her 2010 album *Loud* is perhaps his most well-known diversion from rock, but it wasn't his first. Many will recall the shredder's collaboration with Janet Jackson, as he lent his rhythm licks on 1989's "Black Cat." But still, Bettencourt's ongoing musical soiree with Rhianna remains his pop *crème de le crème*. His fretwork on "Skin" was an entry point to the casa de Nuno for many pop-leaning fans. And if we push forward, before the hubbub surrounding Extreme's new album, *Six*, Bettencourt was seen brandishing his Washburn beside Rihanna during the Super Bowl LVII halftime show.

BRIAN MAY WITH LADY GAGA

She might be one of the modern era's biggest pop stars and a general cultural phenomenon, but Lady Gaga is a simple rock-loving gal at her core. At least, that's the impression given during her collaboration with Brian May on 2011's "Yoü and I." For the uninitiated, "Yoü and I" is best remembered as the penultimate track from Gaga's monster sophomore affair, *Born This Way*. It's undeniable that May, with his Red Special in hand, added a certain *je ne sais quoi* to the festivities. Indeed, Gaga alongside May was a match made in glam-pop heaven, and some 12 years later, despite being labeled a pop song destined for *Billboard* infamy, "Yoü and I" has proved to be a true crossover hit.

NITA STRAUSS WITH DEMI LOVATO

In the summer of 2022, the longtime Alice Cooper tailgunner shocked the (guitar) world by stepping away from the shock rockers band to hit the road with Demi Lovato. Strauss was unfairly labeled a deserter while being subjected to a myriad of retrospectively questionable remarks from armchair critics and curious onlookers. But nearly a year after Strauss took her reprieve, all is well. Her tour with Lovato was an unmitigated success, allowing her to find the crossover success she deserved and desired. And much to the delight of rock fans, Strauss is back on the road with her old friends in the Alice Cooper band, too.

SOPHIE LLOYD WITH, YOU GUESSED IT... MACHINE GUN KELLY

As a shining example of hard work, creativity, grit, talent and determination, Sophie Lloyd is among the hottest names on the shred circuit today. Though innately talented, Lloyd took the road less traveled. Coming from a small town in the U.K., Lloyd parlayed a passion for guitar into a burgeoning career as a successful influencer via YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. And it's a good thing, because that exposure led to polarizing pop star Machine Gun Kelly calling. In an instant, Lloyd's life was changed, leading to mega tours, a solo career, a signature series of guitars with Kiesel and more social media followers than Lloyd could have ever imagined.

SOPHIE LLOYD BREAKS DOWN HER

MOMENTS

MAIN RIFFS AND SOLO IN "DO OR DIE"

OF

WORDS BY
SOPHIE LLOYD

PHOTOS BY
JEN ROSENSTEIN

AND OFFERS SOME USEFUL PLAYING

TRUTH

AND PRACTICING TIPS

For video of this lesson, visit
guitarworld.com/september2023

HELLO, *GW* READERS! IN THIS

exclusive lesson, I'd like to go over my guitar parts and solo in "Do or Die," a song from my upcoming album, *Imposter Syndrome*. But first I want to thank GuitarWorld.com readers for voting "Do or Die" the second-best guitar solo of 2022!

"Do or Die" features vocalist Nathan James, an incredible singer who's also a very good friend of mine. The song took off right out of the gate, and it's now at 1.9 million views on YouTube. Again, thank you to everyone for the incredible, enthusiastic response and support!

The success of "Do or Die" was so crazy, because the song came out at the very end of 2022 and was the first single I'd released in ages. For it to do so well on all of the platforms was great, and I've read *Guitar World* since I was a kid, so the votes from the readers meant so much to me.

INSPIRATION

In writing "Do or Die," I was looking to create an Eighties-style classic rock song. I love that kind of music — I'm wearing an Iron Maiden T-shirt right now! — so I knew I wanted to go in that direction. Nathan is one of my favorite vocalists and I had him specifically in mind for this song. The mindset for the style and direction of the song was along the lines of Iron Maiden, with some gallop-y palm mutes in the rhythm part.

PRIMARY INFLUENCES

Growing up, one of my favorite guitarists was Joe Satriani. He was the first player I became aware of who had made a career of writing instrumental records, all of which I thought were amazing. When I first heard *Surfing with the Alien*, it was the craziest album I'd ever heard, in terms of guitar techniques.

Another primary influence is Slash; he was very inspirational for this new album in particular. I love his 2010 solo album, *Slash* [*also known as* R&FN'R], with all of the collaborations with people like Ozzy

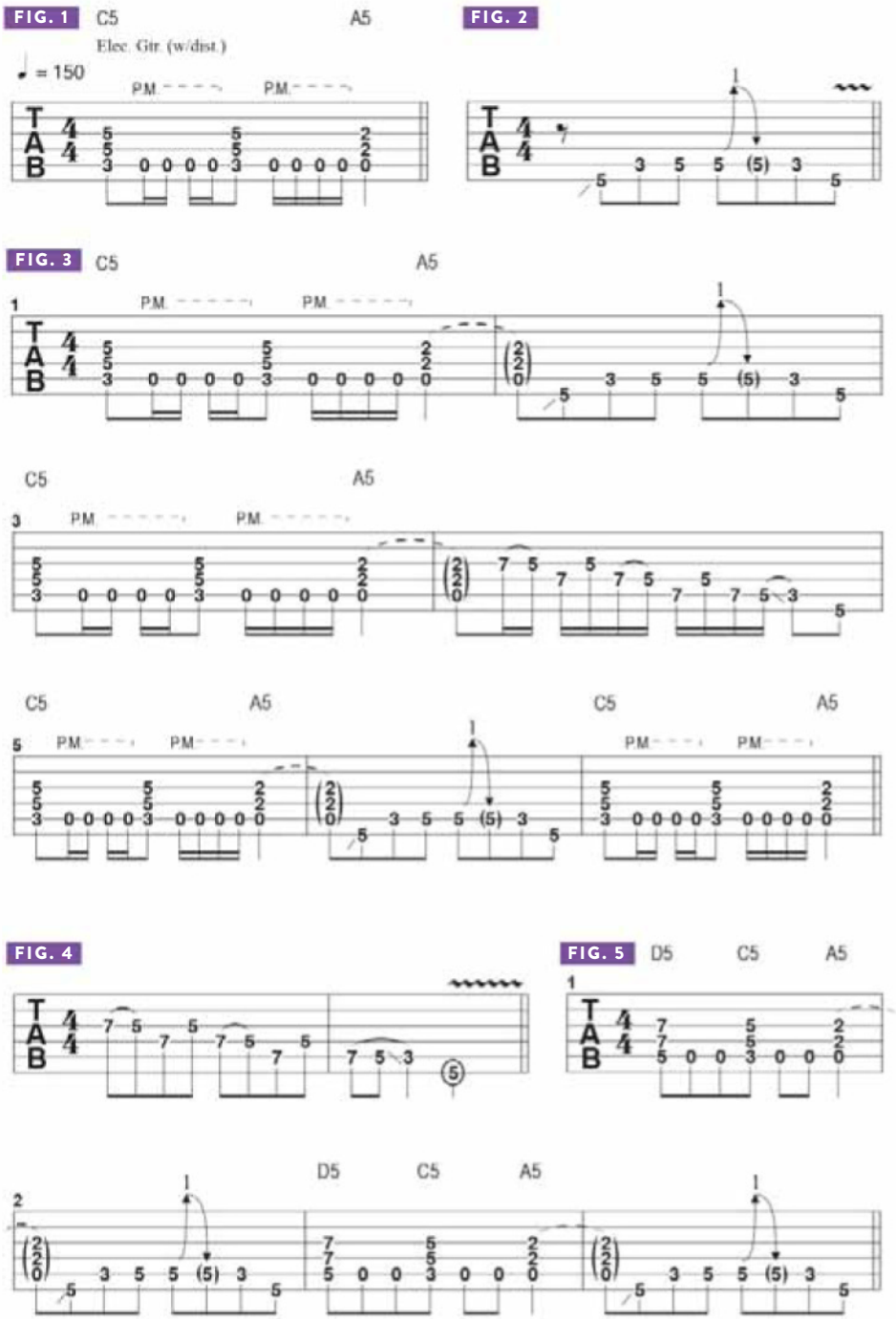


FIG. 6

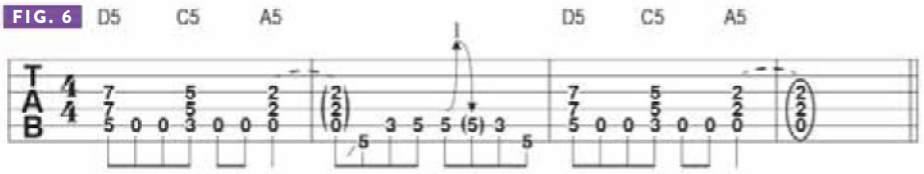


FIG. 7

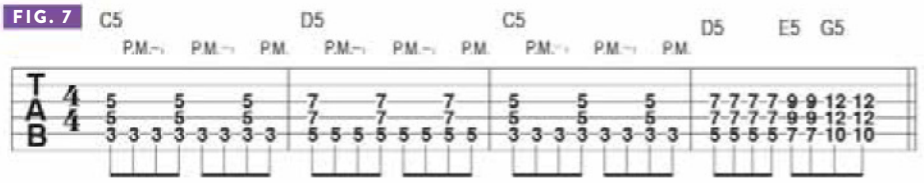


FIG. 8

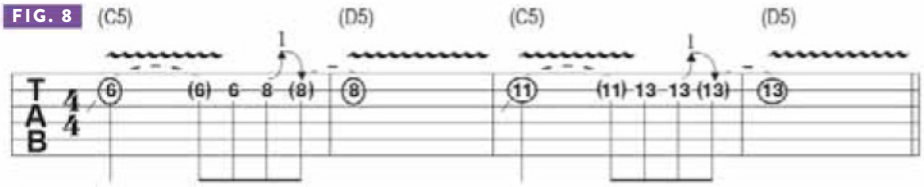


FIG. 9

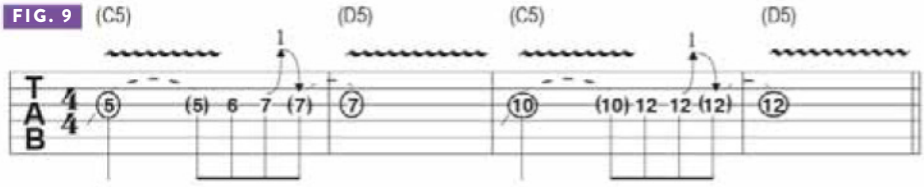


FIG. 10

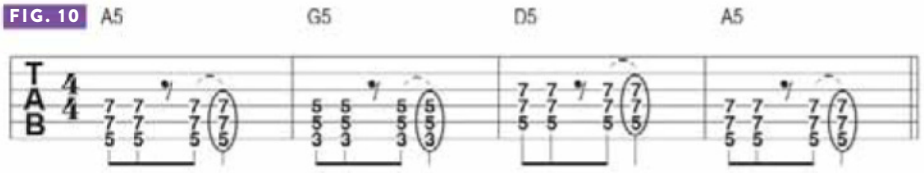
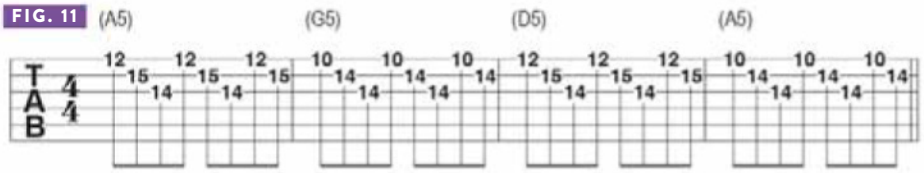


FIG. 11



Osbourne, Fergie, Chris Cornell, M. Shadows and so many incredible people.

I love Guns N' Roses too, as well as Pantera and Black Label Society, and I also was influenced by punk music as I was growing up, including the Misfits, Social Distortion and Rancid. I love the rhythm guitar playing in all of these bands. Overall, for me it was a big mix of different things all compiled together — anything with a killer solo you can jam out to.

One of the first solos I ever learned was "Stairway to Heaven." I spent months trying to learn it. "Hotel California" was another one, as well as Metallica's "Master of Puppets." I also worked on all of the classic Eddie Van Halen solos with fretboard tapping; I thought I was the best guitarist in the world, even though I could only play one of his tapping licks.

HOW TO PLAY "DO OR DIE"

"Do or Die" is played in the key of A minor and at a tempo of 150 beats per minute. I start the song on a C power chord in 3rd position, pedaling off the open A string (see **FIGURE 1**).

The C chord is followed by an A power chord and then a single-note lick, shown in **FIGURE 2**, which is based on the A minor pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G): slide up to the A note at the 5th fret on the low E string, then play C and D on the A string, bending the D note up a whole step to E and then releasing it back down to D, followed by the notes C and A. That figure repeats through the intro (**FIGURE 3**).

This part ends with the quick descending lick shown in **FIGURE 4**, which is also based on A minor pentatonic and is built from a sequence of pull-offs and a finger slide that move across the G, D and A strings.

Next up is the verse section, made up of the chords D5, C5 and A5 and some more open A-string pedaling (**FIGURE 5**). The second time through the two-bar phrase, I hang on the C note and add vibrato, as shown in bar 4. On the fourth time around, as shown in **FIGURE 6**, the phrase ends on the A5 power chord.

> **“THE MINDSET FOR THE STYLE OF THE SONG WAS ALONG THE LINES OF IRON MAIDEN, WITH SOME GALLOP-Y PALM MUTES IN THE RHYTHM PART”**

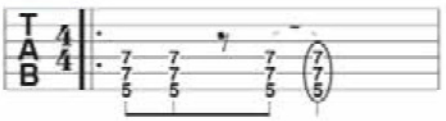
The pre-chorus has a few things going on. As tabbed in **FIGURE 7**, I begin with palm-muted power chords and play the progression C5 - D5 - C5 - D5 - E5 - G5, all on the A, D and G strings. Over this part, I play a harmonized single-note line: the primary melody is played on the B string, as shown in **FIGURE 8**, and the harmony line is played on the G string (**FIGURE 9**).

The chorus guitar parts are fairly simple. The progression is A5 - G5 - D5 - A5, utilizing a down-up-down strumming pattern (**FIGURE 10**). That pattern repeats a few times while I add a higher arpeggiated pattern, tabbed in **FIGURE 11**.

On the D5 chord, I sometimes like to add the low A note on the 6th string, to fatten up the sound of the chord, so I’ll extend my index finger to barre the 6th string as well (see **FIGURE 12**). **FIGURE 13** presents the entire chorus section, as I perform it live. Coming out of the chorus, we add the lick shown in **FIGURE 14**, which is based on A minor pentatonic and functions as a tag for the chorus section. The arrangement then goes back to the verse, pre-chorus and chorus sections, with the added single-note harmonized lines. The only thing that’s different about the second chorus is that the chords go around twice before playing the chorus tag that ends the section.

FIG. 12 D5

FIG. 13 A5



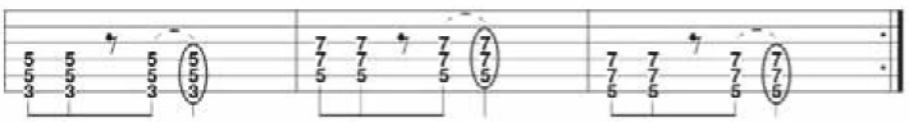


FIG. 14 (A5)

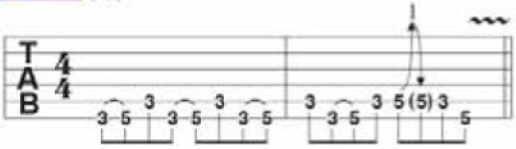
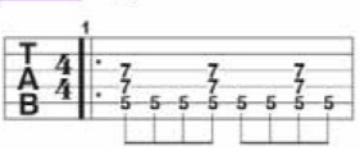
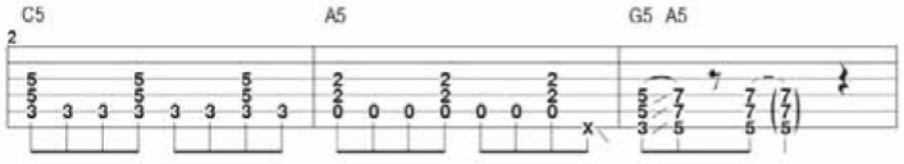
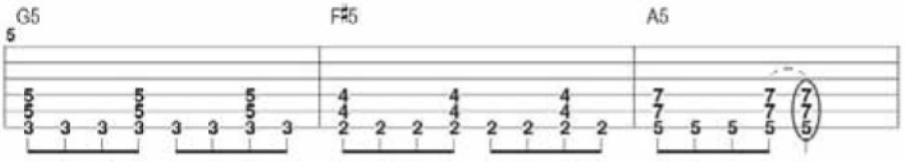


FIG. 15 D5







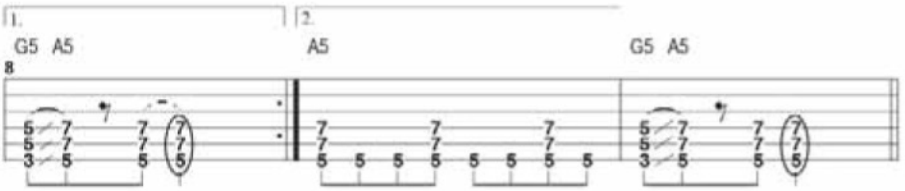
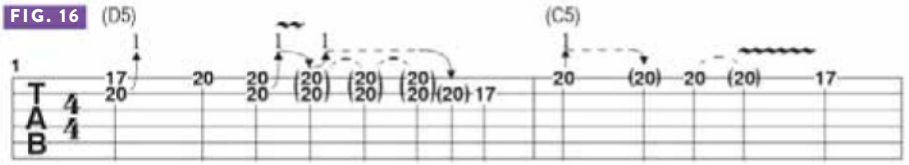


FIG. 16 (D5) (C5)



THE SOLO

AFTER THE SECOND chorus tag, we come to the solo section, which is my favorite part of the song! I play the solo over a progression that’s virtually the same as that for the verses, but there are a few variations. As shown in **FIGURE 15**, I start on D5, followed by C5 and A5, and then slide up from G5 to A5 on the bottom three strings. The progression then shifts to G5 - F♯5 - A5 and another slide up from G5 to A5.

“The success of ‘Do or Die’ was so crazy... I’ve read *Guitar World* since I was a kid, so the votes from the readers meant so much to me,” Lloyd says

The solo is based primarily on A minor pentatonic and moves through various fretboard patterns and positions of the scale as it develops. I begin up at the 17th fret, in the “first box,” with a phrase built from bends and vibratos on the top two strings (see **FIGURE 16**). I then play a descending lick based on a repeating hammer-on/pull-off figure, illustrated in **FIGURE 17**, which is inspired by the types of solos you will hear on many Iron Maiden

songs. From there, I go into **FIGURE 18**, which is a cyclic ascending pattern, played in the "second box" of A minor pentatonic.

FIGURE 19 depicts the entire solo, as played up to speed, including the final phrase, shown in bars 13-16, which is built from a repeating motive that starts with a bend/release and then gradually moves down the A minor pentatonic scale. The solo ends on a natural harmonic (N.H.) sounded at the 5th fret on the G string, after which I add a gradual whammy bar dive.

OUTRO

After the solo, we reprise the chorus, and at this point I add a new guitar part, just to mix it up a bit (see **FIGURE 20**).

That's the song! It's one of the simpler and more straightforward songs on the record, played in what I think of as a true "classic rock" style. I wanted to present a song that's accessible for people to play and isn't filled with a ton of crazy, flashy guitar playing.

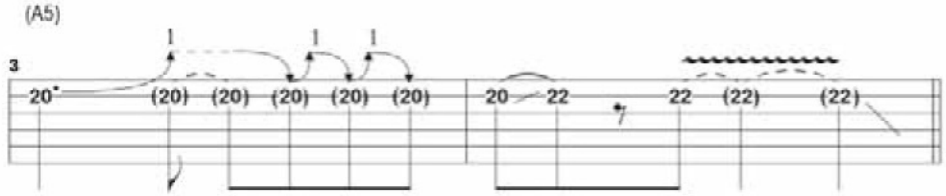


FIG. 17

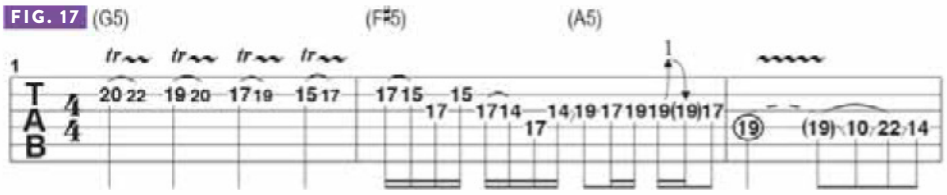


FIG. 18

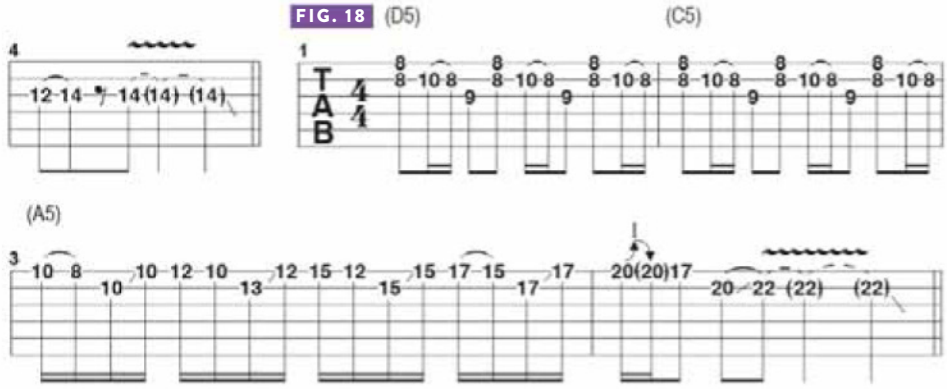
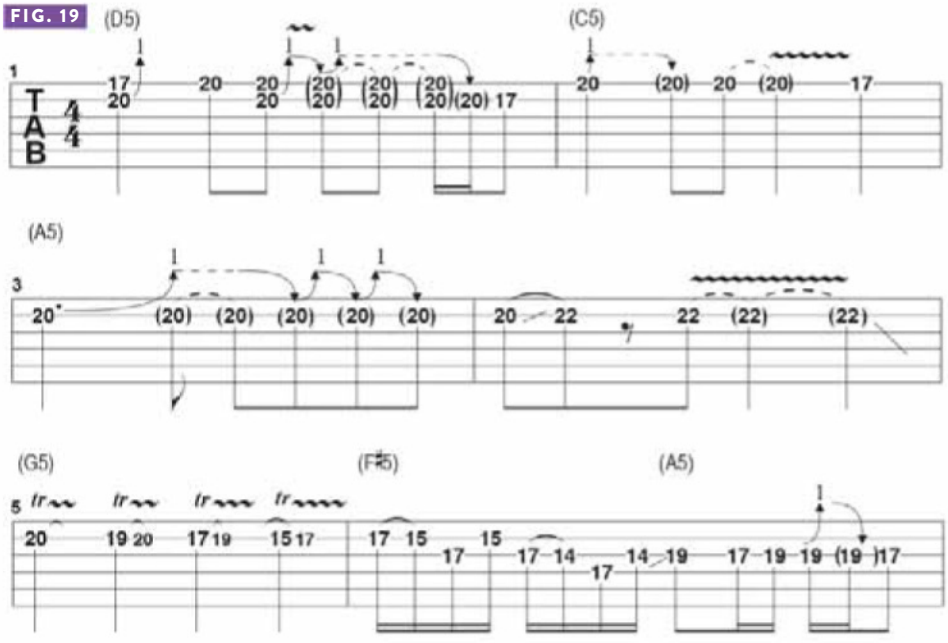


FIG. 19



DEVELOPING SOLOING TECHNIQUE

I like to work on legato phrases when I'm practicing, so the lines I play sound smooth and have a nice flow. I work on alternate and economy picking techniques as well, but I prefer the sound of legato phrases that combine hammer-ons, pull-offs and finger slides. I picked up a lot of great legato ideas from listening to Joe Satriani and Steve Vai, specifically the ways in which they incorporate three-notes-per-string fingering patterns and scale shapes.

FIGURE 21 illustrates one of the typical three-notes-per-string types of phrases I like to work on. It's based on the A Dorian mode (A, B,

> “I PICKED UP A LOT OF GREAT LEGATO IDEAS FROM LISTENING TO JOE SATRIANI AND STEVE VAI”

C, D, E, F♯, G), which is made up of the same notes as the G major scale (G, A, B, C, D, E, F♯). I’ll move this type of phrase all over the neck, as a workout. I find this a really effective way to work on all of the modal positions while strengthening my legato technique. I’ll start with the Ionian mode, the major scale, and then move it up and down the fretboard, so that I can focus on various scale positions and areas of the neck. I love that sort of stuff, which you can hear in a few spots in the “Do or Die” solo. I use this type of legato articulation in many of my solos, as you’ll find in my soloing YouTube videos.

PICKING TECHNIQUES

My preference for single-note soloing is the flowing sound of legato phrases, but I also work on alternate and economy picking techniques all the time. Lately, I’ve been working on economy picking, sticking with the three-notes-per-string approach.

With economy picking, you repeat, or rather continue, the direction of the previous pick stroke when crossing to the next higher or lower string, as you would do when sweep picking, or “raking” the pick across several strings. So if the last note on a given string is picked with a downstroke, then the first note on the next higher string would also be articulated with the same downstroke. Likewise, if the last note on a given string is picked with an upstroke, then the first note on the next lower string would also be articulated with a continuation of that upstroke.

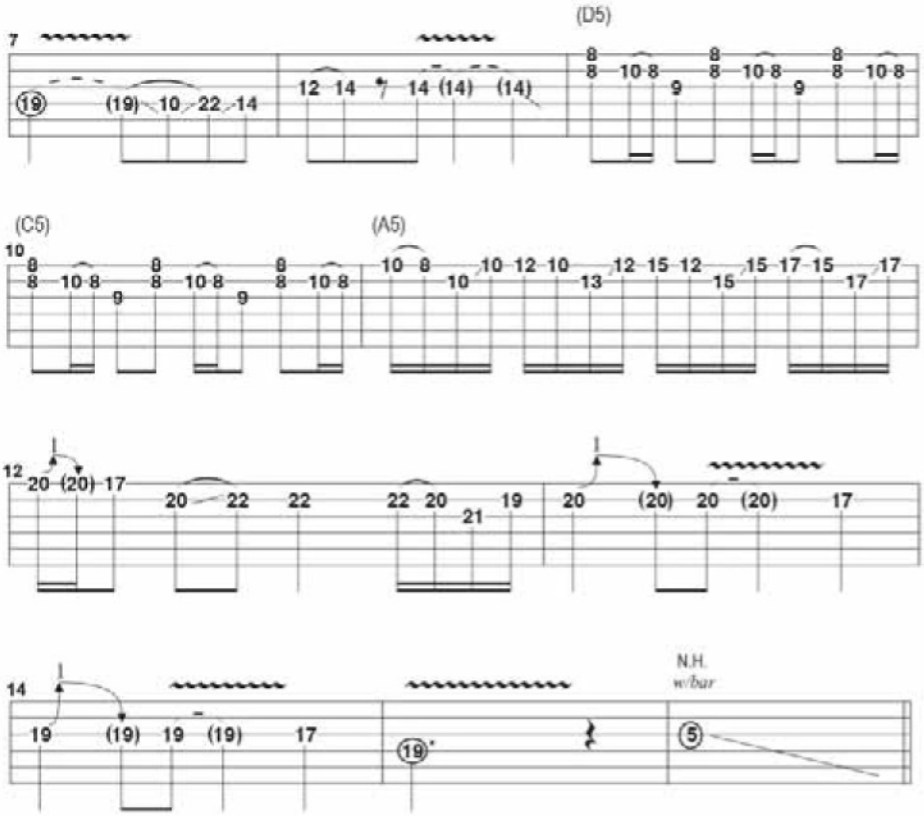


FIG. 20

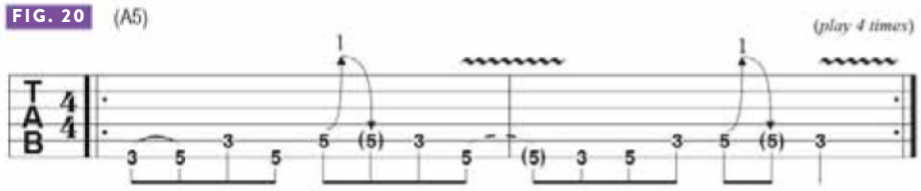
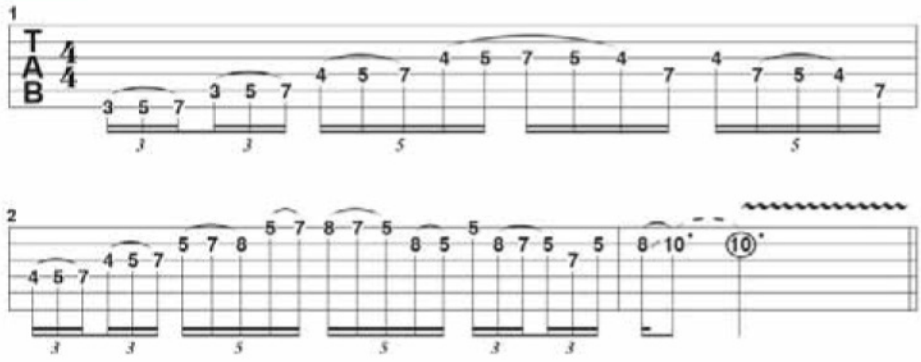


FIG. 21



It’s a really cool and super-efficient technique to hone, but it seems so counterintuitive to what your hands and brain want to do, and it can be challenging to train your hands to maintain a steady rhythm when using the technique in the middle of a run. Economy picking is really helpful with playing fast — you can play crazy fast lines with economy picking — but it’s definitely a challenge to work into your picking style, until you get the hang of it. When I was in college, I had a wonderful opportunity to take a master class with the great Frank Gambale, who introduced me to economy picking. I’ve been watching a lot of his videos lately. He’s an incredible player and musician and a true master of this exciting and very useful picking technique! GW

SOUND CHECK

the gear in review

79
FURCH
Violet D-SM

80
JACKSON GUITARS
X Series Dinky DK3XR HSS

81
APOGEE
Jam X

82
FISHMAN
Fluence Tim Henson Signature Series and Scott LePage Custom Series

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Wet and Wild

BOSS SDE-3000EVH DUAL DIGITAL DELAY

By Chris Gill

EDDIE VAN HALEN never stopped using his pair of Roland SDE-3000 digital delays ever since he first installed them in his stage rack in 1985. His SDE-3000s played a crucial role in his mammoth sound, first in a stereo setup in the Eighties and from the early Nineties onward, as part of a wet/dry/wet rig he innovated, which employed a dry signal in the center and a mix of dry/delay processed signals on the left and right. This gave Van Halen's guitar a huge, reverb-like spread and depth without sacrificing an atom of punch, clarity or definition.

Anyone who has attempted to configure a wet/dry/wet rig like Ed's knows it can be an expensive proposition involving reactive load boxes and speaker-to-line level converters. Fortunately, about eight years ago Ed and his expert team at EVH joined forces with Boss to start development on the SDE-3000EVH Dual Digital Delay pedal, which combines a pair of SDE-3000 delays with an ingenious set of features that significantly simplify a wet/dry/wet rig for studio and stage applications.

CHEAT SHEET

FEATURES Boss released the SDE-3000EVH at the same time as the less expensive SDE-3000D, so I'll first cover the differences that the extra $100 investment provides. The rear panel features numerous additional jacks, including Direct, EFXL and EFXR ¼-inch output jacks that facilitate a wet/dry/wet setup and an EFX Loop for using the dry amp's preamp to drive all three wet/dry/wet outputs for optimal tone. The loop section also includes ground lift and return impedance switches, plus a noise suppressor with adjustable threshold and release parameters. Three ground lift cables are included for eliminating hum that can occur when using three separate amps together. And finally, the pedal has an EVH preset button that accesses eight exclusive non-rewritable presets actually used by Ed — long, medium and short "reverb" and medium mono delays configured in separate sets for wet/dry/wet and stereo rigs.

The top panel will look very familiar to users of original SDE-3000 units as it has the same Time, Feedback, Out, Rate and Depth up/down buttons, square Bank A/B, Memory 1-4, Filter, Time x2, Delay Phase, Mod and Feedback Phase switches and "Back To The Future"-style alpha-numeric LED display that glows brilliant blue. New additions include a Setup switch for accessing deeper parameter settings and individual access switches for Delay 1 and 2. Two footswitches allow users to engage Delay 1 and/or 2 in Manual Mode or select or bypass a pair of presets in Memory mode. A Tap Tempo footswitch is also included. A pair of ¼-inch control jacks enable the connection of various footswitch and pedal controllers, and MIDI In, Out and USB jacks are located on the side panel.

PERFORMANCE Since I own an original SDE-3000 unit from the early Eighties, I had to do an A/B comparison. After carefully tweaking optimal input and output levels on the rack unit and pedal, selecting the correct modulation waveforms and filter characteristics and making other adjustments to ensure all of the finer settings were identical, I truly could not tell the difference — the EVH pedal perfectly matched the world-class delays that made the 3000 a perennial favorite of guitarists and studio pros.

Beware of online video demos that suggest otherwise. The new pedal goes significantly above and beyond the original 3000 with powerful additional features, like sine wave modulation (in addition to the original's triangle wave only) and user programmable low- and high-cut filters for the Filter section, so some of the deeper settings can be quite different from the original. Users should take time and carefully read the manual to familiarize themselves with the various expanded parameters.

Memory mode is great for quickly toggling between two settings or bypassing the effect. Manual mode is best for programming or live applications like engaging each delay individually. The delays can lock to an external clock via MIDI, switch between millisecond or bpm tempo displays and be set to any of 13 different note values like dotted eighth, half and whole notes. Whereas the original unit stored only eight presets, the pedal provides 100 memory locations.

The wet/dry/wet configuration using the four-cable method/EFX loop setup with three amps sounds simply majestic with the corresponding EVH presets and beyond. The delay tails are richly detailed and lush — to this day the sound quality of the SDE-3000 remains the standard to beat (For more about that unit, head to page 110). Using both delays to program chorus and flanger effects can generate lush, complex textures that competing digital delay units in its price range can't match.

STREET PRICE
$599.99
MANUFACTURER
Boss, boss.info

- An EFX loop and three individual outputs greatly simplifies and streamlines a sophisticated wet/dry/wet rig just like Eddie Van Halen used on stage.
- Two independent built-in SDE-3000 delays offer all of the original unit's features and functions plus greatly expanded new functionality and parameters.
- Eight permanent EVH presets burned into the pedal's memory provide identical settings to presets that Eddie Van Halen programmed on his original units.
- The EFX Loop's ground lift switch and noise suppressor, plus three included ground lift cables, make it easy to maintain pristine, noise- and hum-free sound quality.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
For about half the price of the original SDE-3000's 1983 list price, the Boss SDE-3000EVH provides two world-class digital delays with identical sound and expanded features, plus the easiest and most affordable way to duplicate Eddie Van Halen's wet/dry/wet rig setup.

Bare Essence

FURCH VIOLET D-SM

By Chris Gill

LITERALLY DOZENS OF great acoustic guitars are available these days if you have around $1,000 to spend. While newer companies that specialize in entry level models offer some good choices, I often recommend considering a guitar built by a company with a decent history that also offers a selection of instruments extending well into higher price ranges due to experience and "trickle down" quality factors. The new Furch Violet D-SM ticks those boxes, coming from a company with more than four decades of history building guitars in the Czech Republic. Furch opened a U.S.-based distribution facility in Nashville in 2019, making their craftsmanship readily available to American players.

FEATURES The Furch Violet D-SM has the timeless square-shoulder dreadnought body shape and is built from classic tonewoods that include an A-grade Sitka spruce top, AA-grade African mahogany back, sides and neck and ebony fingerboard. Although the model is modestly priced, the soundboards are individually tuned and voiced to provide rich, balanced sound — attention to detail usually found only on more expensive instruments. The guitar's open-pore finish allows the wood to retain its natural resonance and character while still providing protection from the elements. The neck's characteristics include a 25 9/16-inch scale length, soft-V profile, 1 ¾-inch nut width, flat 15 ¾-inch radius and CNR System neck joint design with adjustable dual-action truss rod in a carbon casing for stability with minimized weight.

PERFORMANCE The Furch Violet D-SM may look somewhat austere thanks to the raw wood aesthetics of the open-pore finish, lack of fretboard inlays, simple ring rosette and basic-black nut, saddle, bridge pins and single-layer pickguard, but what its appearance lacks in flash is more than made up for by its first-class playability and sound quality. The neck feel is smooth and luxurious, thanks in large part to the shortened frets that will never extend beyond the fingerboard due to wood expansion/contraction and allow the player's hand to glide along the edges without distracting bumps or snags. The neck profile's "V" is comfortably rounded, allowing the playing hand to comfortably transition from anchoring the thumb in the center to the fretboard edge.

The sound quality is pure, classic dreadnought tone, with deep, powerful bass, mellow mids and singing treble bite. The top refused to overdrive even when subjected to my most heavy-handed DADGAD "Kashmir" performance, and soft fingerstyle passages projected with impressive volume. You really used to have to spend at least four times as much to get dreadnought tones this nuanced and complex.

CHEAT SHEET

LIST PRICE: $1,248
MANUFACTURER: Furch Guitars, furchguitars.com

- The open-pore finish allows the tonewoods to breathe and resonate like raw wood while providing protection from sweat and bodily oils.
- Shortened frets that do not extend to the fretboard edges provide extremely comfortable playability and eliminate protrusion, should the fretboard happen to shrink from weather conditions.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** The Furch Violet D-SM may have a bare basics appearance, but details like its individually voiced soundboard, smooth playability and refined tones compare fairly to those of much more expensive deluxe instruments.

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

And It Was All Yellow

JACKSON GUITARS X SERIES DINKY DK3XR HSS

By Paul Riario

STREET PRICE: $599.99
MANUFACTURER: Jackson Guitars, jacksonguitars.com

- The Dinky DK3XR comes loaded with Jackson's high-output bridge humbucker and middle and neck single-coil pickups with a five-position pickup selector for a range of muscular and classic tones.
- The guitar comes standard with a recessed Floyd Rose Special double-locking tremolo to withstand the most abusive whammy bar offenders.
- Featuring a 12- to 16-inch compound radius bound laurel fingerboard with 24 jumbo frets, the guitar is made for high-velocity playing with zero chance of fretting out.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
  The Jackson X Series Dinky DK3XR HSS is a fast and furious guitar with an affordable price tag that makes it impossible for anyone not to drive this solidly built shred machine home.

THERE ARE LOADS of guitars in black or white, red and blue, or a cornucopia of sunbursts and natural wood finishes. But somehow, when I stumble across a guitar that's screaming with a loud, bright neon finish, I easily succumb to my inner urge to take that guitar out for a fleet-fingered ride for all to see. And that's exactly how I rolled when I test-drove the new Jackson Guitars X Series Dinky DK3XR HSS in a blaring Caution Yellow finish with neon pink pickups. Say what you will, but my temerity to strap on such an outrageous instrument is boundless. This X Series Dinky DK3XR is indeed a fast and loud guitar, and I'll joyride this V12 Lambo-equivalent as my next six-string companion for as long as I can.

FEATURES For speedsters, the Jackson X Series Dinky DK3XR HSS is all about street-cred shred in an eye-catching finish. The guitar features a nyatoh body (similar in density to mahogany) and a bolt-on maple neck with graphite reinforcement (for stability against shifting temperatures) as well as a scarf joint for its color-matched six-in-line reverse-pointed headstock. The neck's sculpted heel is fashioned for swift access to the upper echelon of its 24 jumbo frets, along with a satin-finish back for frictionless playability and comfort, a laurel fingerboard with rolled edges and inverted pearloid sharkfin inlays and a 12- to 16-inch compound radius that impedes any fretting-out. The guitar's dashboard sports a five-position blade switch pickup selector, single volume and tone controls, and a recessed Jackson-branded Floyd Rose-licensed double-locking tremolo bridge system. The guitar's high-output roar comes courtesy of a Jackson bridge humbucker and Jackson single-coil middle and neck pickups that make their presence known in bright pink pickup bobbins. The X Series Dinky DK3XR HSS guitars are available in Caution Yellow and Neon Pink finishes with black hardware.

PERFORMANCE First impressions are important when it comes to guitars, and thankfully, there are no hidden surprises with the neon-bright Dinky DK3XR HSS — except for its shockingly affordable price tag. At a sub-$600 cost, the guitar ticks all the boxes from sensational to superb for guitarists looking to take a speed machine out on the road. Starting with its spot-on setup and low action, the Dinky DK3XR HSS feels already broken in with smooth playability and a super-slim neck profile that facilitates breakneck playing styles. The Dinky body shape is also geared for playing fast, with wider cutaway contours and a sleek profile that removes any sense of the guitar feeling cumbersome — and it also helps that this particular model is refreshingly lightweight and ergonomically agile in its placement of controls. The Jackson-branded Floyd Rose-licensed tremolo bridge system works well for devil-may-care dive bombing and harmonic popping, and is surprisingly stable and not as rickety as other double-locking tremolos that come stock on similar models.

Jackson went with their own custom high-output pickups for the guitar's HSS configuration, and these pickups, much like everything else with this guitar, are unexpectedly great. The bridge humbucker pushes the right amount of boosted output for note articulation and measured heat for body in rhythm work and solos, while both the single coils deliver the requisite spank and quack with crystal clear polish. I'm sure some players might want to upgrade these pickups down the road for more slice or depth, but as stock pickups, there's no arguing they deliver the goods and then some.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Buzz Bin
Apogee Jam X

AUDIO INTERFACES COME in all shapes and sizes, but when it comes to being lightweight and mobile and having a clean design — combined with boasting the utmost in studio-quality fidelity — it's hard to beat Apogee's notable Jam audio interfaces. From the original Jam introduced in 2010 to the popular Jam +, Apogee's Jam series has been the reliable and proven audio interface for efficiently connecting your musical instruments to a computer or tablet without hassle. This time around, Apogee has returned with Jam X, a brand-new iteration of their famed portable interface with a twist — or more accurately, a squeeze — that includes a built-in compressor with three (preset) levels of tone-shaping compression. Needless to say, Jam X is so easy to use and polished in its sound that many players will find its intuitive operation encouraging for more on-the-go recording.

Jam X's onboard analog compressor is a welcome inclusion for guitarists in its ability to shape the input level of your clean signal. It's key for dialing in more sustain or boosting a weaker signal, and balancing dynamics with its three modes of compression: Smooth Leveler (subtle and light compression), Purple Squeeze (medium compression) and Vintage Blue Stomp (heavy, aggressive compression), all accessed by pushing in the large Input Level adjustment knob. However, this effect will prove just as useful with other instruments like bass, keyboards, synths or acoustic instruments with pickups. Add to that a Blend mode button that toggles Jam X's signal path between software monitoring and direct monitoring to record with zero latency. In addition, Apogee's PureDIGITAL connection circuitry establishes an immaculate sound quality that's quite recognizable. Its 24-bit/96kHz high-resolution audio sample rates offer ample headroom, crystal-clear clarity and increased volume to your headphones or powered speakers when hearing audio playback. Jam X comes in a bulletproof metal housing and features a three-color LED display (input level, Comp preset and Blend mode), Blend on/off button, Input Level knob, 1/4-inch instrument input, 1/8-inch output (for connections to headphones or powered speakers) and micro USB B-port. Jam X is compatible with Mac, PC and iOS and comes with cables for USB A and USB C connections (lightning available but sold separately), and it ships with Ableton Live Lite software and a 60-day trial version of the Archetype: Tim Henson plugin from Neural DSP.

There's very little not to like and a lot to love with Jam X. For players who use virtual amp sims or certain plugins, the added compression may seem a bit superfluous, but that may not be the point for this simplified interface where Jam X becomes your frontline sketchpad for quickly dialing in a fat tone to work with and to simply lay down tracks and ideas. Overall, the compressed presets sound fantastic and specifically work as a foundation for enhancing dynamics, smoothing out peaks and adding definition to your electric or acoustic guitar tone. But most of all, having Jam X flawlessly capture studio-grade sound in a pocket-sized guitar interface that I can take anywhere is enough for me to say it's a must-have. — *Paul Riario*

STREET PRICE: $199
MANUFACTURER: Apogee, apogeedigital.com

SC

Polymorph

FISHMAN FLUENCE TIM HENSON SIGNATURE SERIES AND SCOTT LEPAGE CUSTOM SERIES

By Chris Gill

Fishman's Fluence Tim Henson Signature Series [*top*] and Scott LePage Custom Series

FOR MOST GUITARISTS, the general appeal of artist signature gear is being able to play the same instruments and duplicate the same sounds used by the artists themselves. However, truly great signature gear can also help guitarists find their own voice and can be embraced by players from a variety of genres, like the Gibson Les Paul or, more recently, the EVH Wolfgang. Fishman's new Fluence Signature and Custom Series humbucking pickup sets developed with Polyphia guitarists Tim Henson and Scott LePage will certainly appeal to fans of Polyphia's innovative multi-textural tones, but even guitarists ranging from conservative traditionalists to adventurous progressives will be enticed by the impressive sonic character and versatility that these pickups offer.

We evaluated each set separately installed in a pair of virtually identical Ibanez AZ42P1 guitars with basswood bodies, roasted maple necks and rosewood fingerboards. Switches consisted of a three-way pickup selector and a three-way mini toggle for selecting each voice. Both test models also had Fishman's optional lithium ion battery pack.

FEATURES The Tim Henson Signature Series set is designed to provide acoustic-style clean tones in addition to a wide range of full humbucking and single-coil tones for heavier electric textures. The Scott LePage Custom Series is more electric oriented, providing vintage and hot-rodded humbucker and single-coil tones as well as voices optimized for clean tones. Both pickups feature Alnico V bar magnets and are available with either black or white bobbins, but the Hensons have 12 screw polepieces while the LePages have six slug and six screw polepieces that are gold plated. Both sets are direct replacements for standard-size humbuckers.

The Tim Henson set offers a diverse range of tones and textures, including semi-acoustic. The bridge pickup's voices consist of hot-rodded Classic with a 1.65Hz midrange peak (1), Henson's enhanced humbucker with 2.3kHz and 480Hz peaks (2) and a 6kHz peak single-coil (3) that Henson usually uses combined with neck pickup single-coil voice. The neck humbucker's voices include a thick, smooth humbucker (1), a 9.5kHz and 450Hz peak setting designed to replicate his electric-acoustic solidbody nylon string guitar's tone when used with a clean amp setting (2) and a single-coil with a 4.2kHz peak (3) that he prefers in the aforementioned neck/bridge setting above.

Scott LePage's set provides a versatile selection of electric tones. The bridge pickup offers a vintage PAF voice with a 2.4kHz midrange peak (1), a classic hot-rodded voice with a darker 1.7kHz peak that still maintains outstanding clarity and definition (2) and slightly overwound single-coil voice with a 4kHz peak (3). The neck humbucker's voices consist of a vintage PAF with 3kHz peak (1), an exclusive custom humbucker voice with 4.7kHz and 360Hz peaks with distinctive brilliant chime, full bodied mids and tight bass (2) and a vintage single-coil with 5kHz peak (3).

PERFORMANCE Fishman Fluence pickups in general are great for guitarists who prefer to employ a wide variety of tones without changing instruments, but with each of these sets the differences between voices can be so dramatic that it truly sounds like an entirely different guitar is being played. The 12 different voices provided by these two sets cover an incredible range. If you're a session player who wants to minimize cartage, these two sets can cover a lot of ground with just two guitars.

My favorite humbucker tones are a toss-up between the Henson's enhanced bridge voice 2, which is tastefully punchy and well balanced, and the LePage's vintage PAF voice 1, which has the aggressive yet sweet character players want from a good PAF. The single-coil tones are stellar as well, and while I found that the Henson set's neck voice 2 didn't quite deliver the nylon-string-style tones promised, I'm sure that Henson employs some clever tricks in his rig to accomplish that goal.

CHEAT SHEET

LIST PRICE
$289.95 (each set)
MANUFACTURER
Fishman, fishman.com

- The Tim Henson Signature Series provides an impressive variety of voices optimized for everything from the heaviest grind to sweet acoustic nylon-style finesse.
- The Scott LePage Custom Series covers a wide range of humbucking and single-coil tones with vintage and hot-rodded voices.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** The Fishman Fluence Tim Henson Signature Series and Scott LePage Custom Series each offer guitarists an incredibly versatile and useful range of tones that modern adventurists and classic purists alike will find highly alluring.

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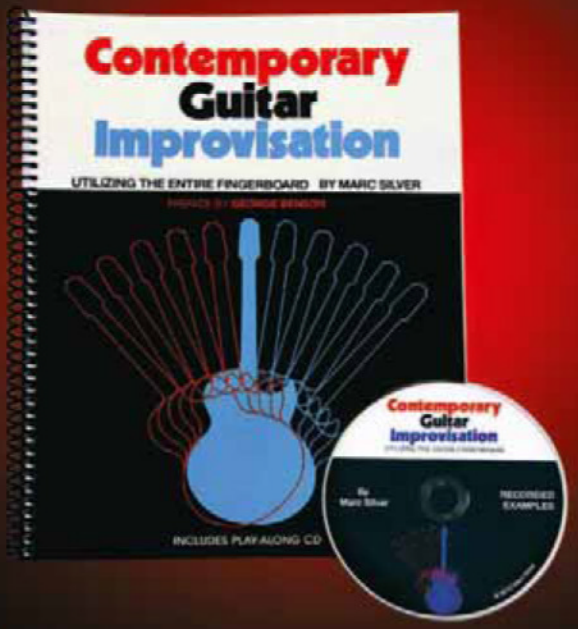

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IN DEEP
by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to
guitarworld.com/september2023

QUADRAPHONIC

How to weave four-part guitar harmonies

ONE OF THE coolest sounds is that of a melody that's harmonized, either on the same instrument or another. Many are well-familiar with the dual lead lines heard in the Allman Brothers Band songs "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed," "Whipping Post" and "Blue Sky," the Beatles' "And Your Bird Can Sing," Thin Lizzy's "The Boys Are Back in Town," Steely Dan's "Reelin' In the Years," Iron Maiden's "The Trooper" and many other songs. In this lesson, I'll demonstrate ways in which you can to add a harmonized line on top of single-note melody. Let's first lay down a repeating rhythm part that we'll then stack the guitar harmonies on top of.

FIGURE 1 presents a two-bar rhythm part that's played in the key of E and in the style of the basic rhythmic vamp of Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)." The open low E string is accented on beats 1 and 3 in each bar. In bar 1, on beats 2 and 4, a low G note is followed by a hammer-on from the open D string to E at the 2nd fret, with the open B string ringing along with the E note. Bar 2 is nearly the same, with the exception of beat 4, where pull-off licks are played on the bottom two strings.

A great way to weave harmonized parts is to use a looper pedal. In this lesson's video, I use a TC Electronic Ditto II, which has a designated "stop" switch. Once the rhythm part is laid down, I can solo over it freely. In **FIGURE 2**, I add lines based on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D).

The best way to start building a harmonized solo is with a melodic line that's clearly defined. **FIGURE 3** illustrates a rhythmically straightforward melody that's based on a combination of the E minor pentatonic scale and the parallel E major pentatonic scale (E, F♯, G♯, B, C♯). It begins with an Albert King-style two-step "overbend." As shown in **FIGURES 4** and **5**, the line can also be interpreted in a modal context, relating to either E Dorian (E, F♯, G, A, B, C♯, D) or E Mixolydian (E, F♯, G♯, A, B, C♯, D).

There are various ways in which to harmonize a melody. The approach used in this lesson is to repeatedly stack notes that are located a 3rd higher and diatonic to (within the scale structure) of E Dorian. As the melody in **FIGURE 3** starts on G, the first harmony starts a 3rd higher (or two scale degrees higher), on B. This is shown in **FIGURE 6**. **FIGURE 7** demonstrates how to play this two-part line on one guitar.

In **FIGURE 8**, I add a line a 3rd above the previous harmony line, now starting on D, which is a 3rd above B. **FIGURE 9** shows the starting notes of each of the three lines — G, B and D. Finally, **FIGURE 10** adds our third harmony, or fourth line overall, starting on F♯, a 3rd above D and the 9th of E.

FIG. 1 (E7)

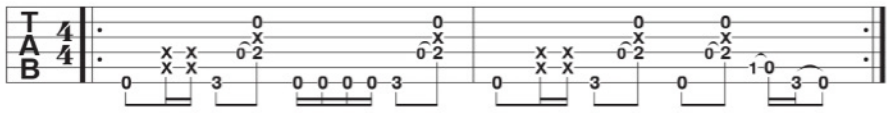


FIG. 2 (E7)

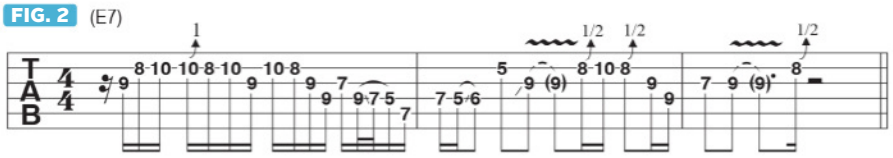


FIG. 3 (E7)

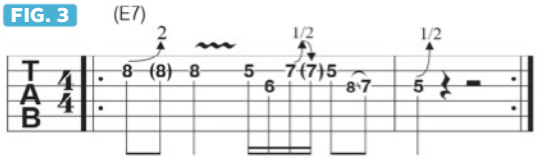


FIG. 4 E Dorian

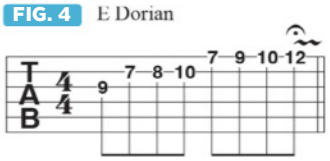


FIG. 5 E Mixolydian

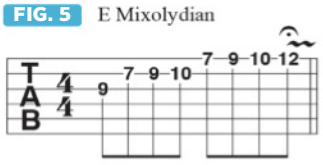


FIG. 6 (E7)

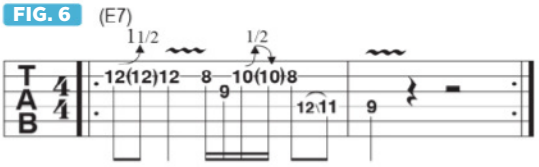


FIG. 7 (E7)

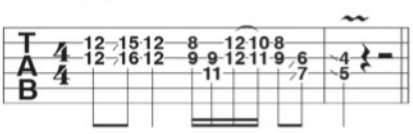


FIG. 8 (E7)

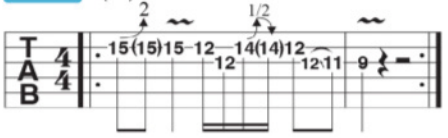


FIG. 9 (E7)

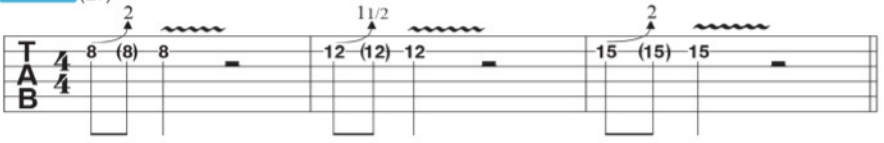
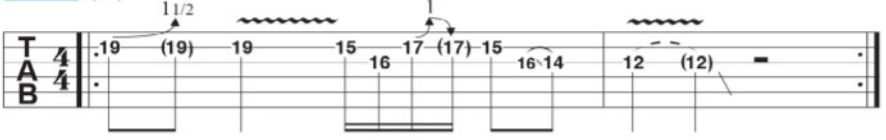


FIG. 10 (E7)



***GW* associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction. His latest album, *Light of Love*, is available now.**

ALISON HASBACH

TALES FROM NERDVILLE
by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/september2023

TOOLS OF THE TRADE, PART 5

The 1959 Blonde Gibson ES-345

TODAY, WE CONTINUE our "guitar safari" with a look at one of my favorite axes, the Gibson ES-345. The 345 and 355 are famous for their stereo pickup configuration and Varitone circuit, which is a six-position control with a rotary knob that allows you to switch between different predetermined frequency scoops, altering the EQ of the highs, mids and lows. I will get more into these variables in a moment.

The guitar in hand today is a 1959 ES-345 in a rare blonde finish. This particular guitar was found in a barn outside of Oakland, California, and made its way to me! I'll go through the many different sounds one can get from this incredible instrument, using a stereo cable plugged straight into a 1963 Fender Vibroverb. To me, this guitar is a real "blues machine," and I really love it!

Let's first run through the sound of each toggle switch setting — neck pickup, both pickups and bridge pickup — with the Varitone in the "#1" position. **FIGURE 1** is played on the neck pickup, which yields a fat sound that still has plenty of bite and presence. The lick is in the key of C, is played in a B.B. King-like style and is based on the C minor pentatonic scale (C, E♭, F, G, B♭) with the addition of the major 3rd, E.

For **FIGURE 2**, I've switched to the middle position and play with more of a B.B.-influenced Eric Clapton approach, with faster 16th- and 32nd-note triplets in bars 1 and 2. With both the neck and bridge pickups on, the tone is way brighter.

In **FIGURE 3**, I've switched to the bridge, or "lead," pickup, aptly named because this setting will cut through the mix, no matter the Varitone setting, and is ideal for soloing. A listen to just about any Freddie King song will clearly demonstrate this. The lick here is based primarily on C major pentatonic (C, D, E, G, A) and is most definitely in a hybrid B.B./Freddie style, inhabiting what's commonly called the "B.B. box" in 13th position.

My favorite B.B. King Varitone setting is derived from one he used on his classic 1965 album, *Live at the Regal*. Every Varitone is a little different, but generally speaking, settings #2 and #3 with the bridge pickup will yield a sound very close to B.B.'s on that record. **FIGURE 4** is an improvised solo along the lines of what he played on "Sweet Little Angel," with licks that draw notes from both C minor pentatonic and C major pentatonic.

The Varitone switch affects the sound of the guitar regardless of the pickups selected, and in **FIGURE 5**, I demonstrate the differences between Varitone positions #1, #2 and #3, with the neck pickup engaged, playing licks based primarily on C minor pentatonic.

One final bit of advice about getting a 345 or 355: don't remove the Varitone! This six-way switch is a very cool part of what sets these instruments apart from others. If you don't want a Varitone, then just get a 335, which is a great guitar too!

FIG. 1 Neck Pickup (C7)

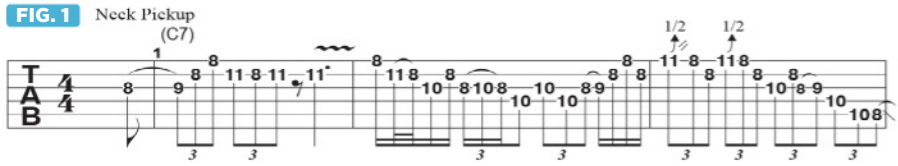


FIG. 2 Neck and Bridge Pickups (C7)

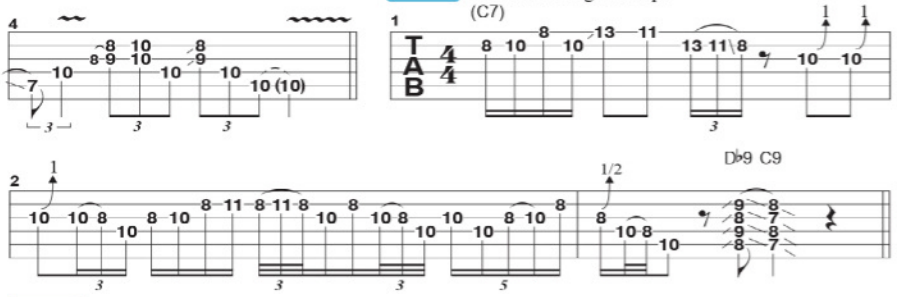


FIG. 3 Bridge Pickup (C7)

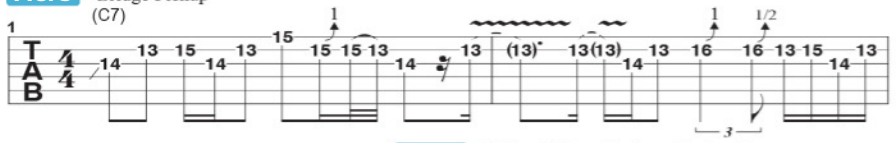


FIG. 4 Bridge Pickup, Varitone Setting #2 (C7) (G7) (D♭7)

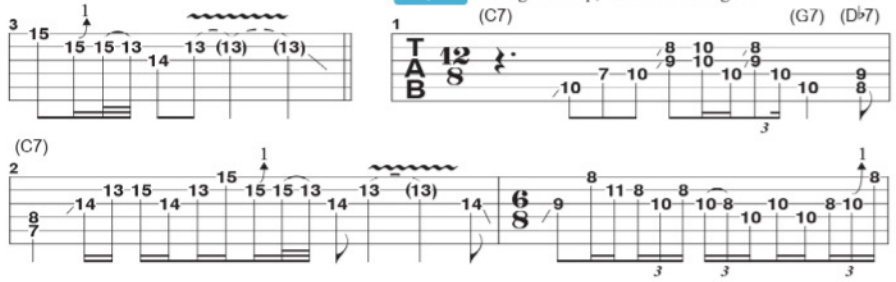
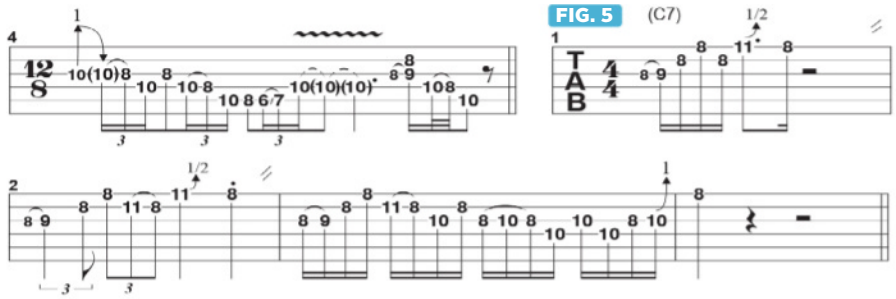


FIG. 5 (C7)



Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues.

ELEANOR JANE

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/september2023

STORY TELLING

Describing a chord progression in a solo

OVER THE NEXT two columns, I'd like to discuss my guitar solo in "Welcome Home," a tune I had written and recorded for the 2016 Andy Timmons Band album, *Theme From a Perfect World*. The solo is played over what is basically a repeating four-bar, three-chord progression, but the approach I took for the solo was to craft lines that are melodic and hooky and played in an emotive, expressive way, while also targeting elements of the chords, so that the melody clearly dictates, or describes, the underlying progression.

The solo is played in the key of E and is 32 bars long. **FIGURE 1** shows the first 16 bars, starting with a two-bar pick-up of D, sounded with the open D string and an F♯ note, fretted on the G string's 11th fret, followed by a low E♭ note joining the higher F♯, making reference to an Eb diminished chord, which sets up the solo section, beginning in bar 1 with a big E5 chord. The E5 chord rings across the first four bars of the solo, with the bass guitar outlining the chord progression of single bars of E5 and C, followed by two bars on A, or A5. In bars 2 and 3 of the solo, I use my pickup selector toggle switch as an "on/off" switch, which allows me to create the rhythmic syncopation sounded here as quarter-note triplets.

Bars 4-6 of the solo are based on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D). But the line becomes more nuanced in bar 7, with the inclusion of the major 2nd, F♯, and in bar 8, as the major 3rd, G♯ is bent up to the 4th, A, then released to G♯ as the progression returns to E5. The presence of the major 3rd, G♯, over E5 implies an E major tonality (E, G♯, B) and serves to solidify the connection between the solo and the implied chord progression.

In bar 10 I use the E note to make a strong connection to the C chord, as E is the major 3rd of C (C, E, G). Likewise, in bar 11 I utilize the A note to make reference to the A chord. And, in bar 13, I once again incorporate G♯ on the return to E5. That bar ends with bends on the B string that are joined by the open high E string, which I utilize as a drone. This serves as yet another way to imply the harmony within the solo. In bar 15, over A5, the open E note reappears with notes fretted on the B string.

The first half of the solo wraps up in the final bar with a pair of ascending unison bends, which nicely set up and kick off the second half of the solo with a D note, the ♭7 (flatted 7th) of E, played over E5 in bar 17.

FIGURES 2-4 show how the open B and high E strings can easily be incorporated into the E, C and A chords, with short melodic lines in **FIGURE 4** demonstrating how strategically-placed single notes can relate effectively to the chord progression.

FIG. 1

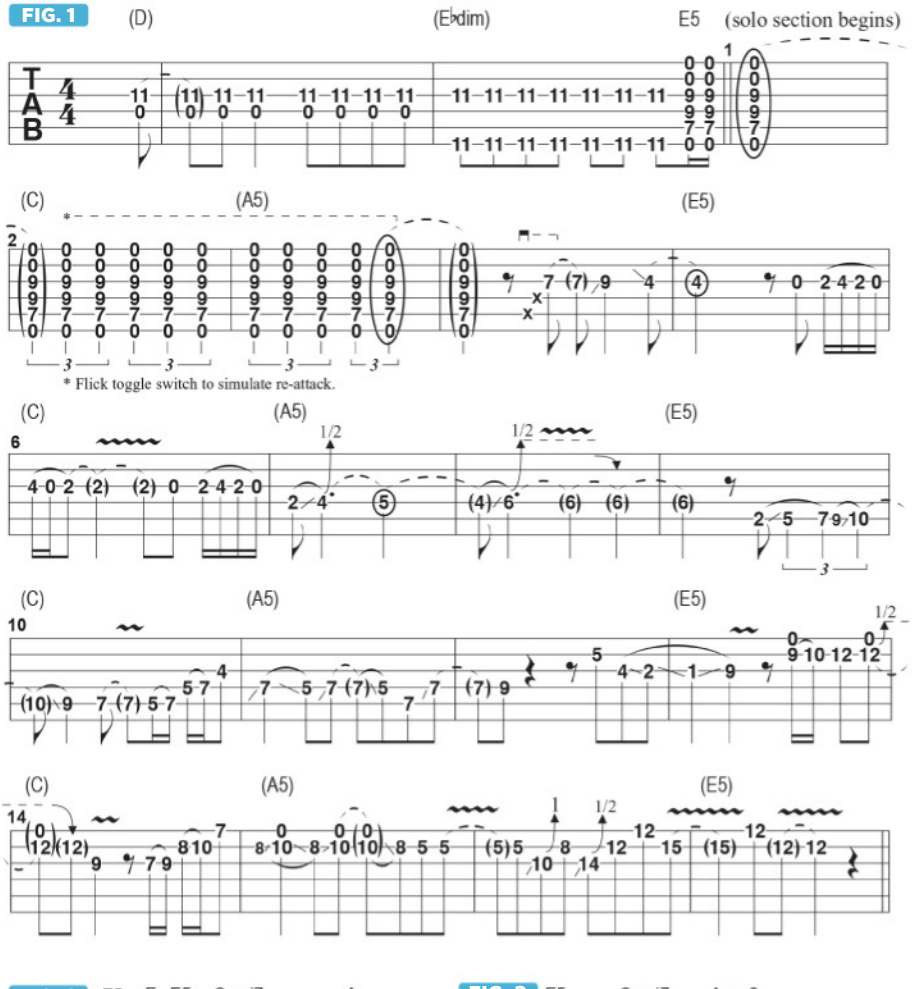


FIG. 2

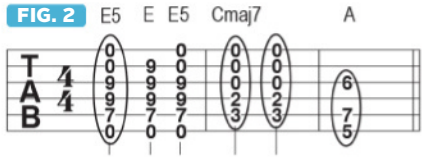


FIG. 3

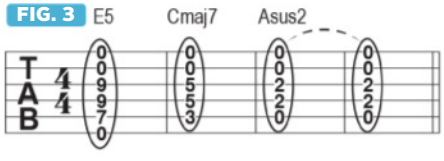
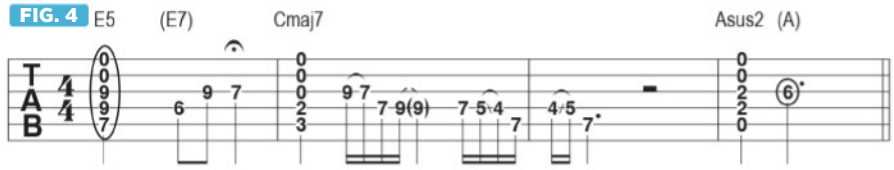


FIG. 4



Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His latest album, *Electric Truth*, is out now.

SIMONE CECHETTI

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/september2023

DIMINISHED RETURNS, PART 2

More on using diminished shapes in a blues solo

LAST MONTH, WE began our investigation into ways in which to incorporate diminished ideas into a blues solo. Our examples were based on a standard 12-bar blues progression in the key of A, and we made it from the I (one) chord, A6, to the IV (four) chord, D7, and back. This month, let's continue by heading from the I chord to the V (five), E7, and back, using diminished 7 chord shapes, which I'll refer to simply as diminished, as harmonic-melodic "bridges" between the primary chords.

As shown in **FIGURE 1**, I'm transitioning from A6 to E7 using E♭dim7 as a bridge. A great thing about a diminished chord is that any of its four notes may be considered the root. For example, the notes A, E♭, G♭ (F♯) and C, as shown in bar 2, can be thought of as an E♭dim7, Adim7, G♭dim7 or Cdim7 chord.

FIGURE 2 is a single-note solo line that demonstrates the incorporation of a diminished phrase between A6 and E7. Bar 1 is based on the A blues scale (A, C, D, E♭, E, G), and in bar 2 I outline an E♭dim7 arpeggio with the notes C, E♭, G♭ and A, followed by a shift to an E7 arpeggio in bar 3.

FIGURE 3 shows how I shift from playing an A chord to G♭dim7, which is an inversion of E♭dim7. And in **FIGURE 4** I play a melodic line that begins in the 5th position with notes from the A blues scale over the A chord, then flow into an E♭dim7 lick in bar 2, setting up a shift to "open-position" E blues licks over E7 in bars 3 and 4.

In **FIGURE 5**, I demonstrate how to play over bars 7-11 of the progression. I begin on A6 in bar 1 then play a line based on E♭dim7 in bar 2, which serves as my bridge to E7 in bar 3, where I then play E7 licks in a typical blues style with open strings.

At the end of bar 3, I slide from C up to D and play a D7 arpeggio over D7 with the notes D, F♯, A and C. I then resolve the line with notes that set up a return to A6.

Practice playing through this part of the progression using chords only at first, as this exercise will help strengthen your connection to the way the chords change. Then try to navigate and describe the changes melodically. When I was a kid, I'd practice adding diminished chord ideas one half step below the next chord in any song, as a means to train my fingers and ears toward hearing these variables in the harmony.

Let's close out this lesson with a look at the last four bars of a 12-bar blues, bars 9-12, which move from the V chord, E7, to the IV, D7, then back to the I, A6. **FIGURES 6** and **7** illustrate two-bar ideas over E7. In **FIGURE 8**, I make use of the B.B. box over E7 in bar 1 to set up D♭dim7 in bar 2, melodically carrying us back through E7, D7 and E♭dim7 and finally back to the I chord, A6.

All examples played with a swing-eighths feel (♫ = ♩³♪)

FIG. 1 A6 E7 E♭dim7 G♭dim7

FIG. 2 (A6)

(E♭dim7) (E7)

FIG. 3 A6 G♭dim7 E♭dim7

FIG. 4 (A6) (E♭dim7) (E7)

FIG. 5 A6 (E♭dim7) (E7) (D7) (A6)

FIG. 6 E7

FIG. 7 (E7)

FIG. 8 (E7) (D♭dim7) (E7)

(D) (A♭dim7) (A6) A

Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard. His latest album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now.

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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS **By Jimmy Brown**

"WILL OF THE PEOPLE"

Muse

MUSE MASTERMIND Matt Bellamy used both his go-to Manson guitar and early Eighties Fender Telecaster to track this popular new song's simple but highly effective and super catchy six-string parts. Also employing fuzz distortion and octave doubling effects (both an octave above and below), the crafty guitarist achieves a huge, Godzilla-like tone that fills out the sonic spectrum in an exciting way and carries the song, which is essentially built around two very basic and repetitive bass-line-type single-note riffs.

Before playing any notes, Bellamy establishes the song's infectious triplet-based shuffle groove in the intro by strumming his bottom three strings in a lopsided swing-eighths rhythm — "*long*-short-*long*-short" — while using fret-hand muting to prevent any notes from sounding, resulting in a pitchless, percussive attack. Indicated by stacks of X's in the tablature, these scratchy "chik-a chik-a" rhythms are performed by lightly laying all four fret-hand fingers across the strings at an arbitrary point — it doesn't matter where specifically the hand is positioned, as no notes are sounded — while strumming down-up-down-up, with the previously described rhythmic feel.

Bellamy introduces the song's main riff two bars into the first verse, with bassist Chris Wolstenholme doubling the notes an octave lower (see section B, bars 10-12). The riff is based on the A minor pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G), with two well-placed chromatic passing tones inserted — C♯, between C and D, and G♯, between G and A — which help give the riff a "futuristic bluesy" quality. Notice also the call-and-response phrasing structure within the two-bar riff, as well as to the way it relates to the vocals in the larger repeating four-bar phrase.

For the pre-chorus (Section C), Bellamy and Wolstenholme lay down a simple, fat-sounding bed of open low E notes in lockstep fashion and with a syncopated, punctuated eighth-note rhythm. Most of the notes fall on the eighth-note upbeats — on the "and" counts between the beats. Be sure to completely mute, or "choke," the string with both hands during each eighth-note rest.

"YOU NEVER GIVE ME YOUR MONEY"

The Beatles

ONE OF THE Fab Four's final and finest creations, this gem from their swansong album features Paul McCartney on piano, bass and vocals and brilliantly tasteful electric guitar work from John Lennon and George Harrison, with Lennon contributing most of the arrangement's improvised, solo-y licks on his Epiphone Casino and Harrison serving up shimmering chordal arpeggios on his Fender rosewood Telecaster.

We've arranged McCartney's beautiful, plaintive piano intro and 1st verse accompaniment for fingerstyle guitar (see sections A and B), in a way that's musically pleasing and authentic and fairly easy to play. When picking the arpeggios in bars 4 and 7, allow the notes to ring together as much as possible. And notice the 12th-fret natural harmonics (N.H.) in bar 8. There's a potentially tricky quick position shift in bar 16, where you need to abruptly move from a C note on the high E string's 8th fret to a 10th-position Am7 chord shape. With practice, this move should become fairly easy to perform.

The song's 2nd verse (section C) introduces an entirely new chord progression and groove, with a bouncy swing-16ths feel. Lennon (Gtr. 2 part) lays down some funky rhythm guitar here, using barre chords and percussive fret-hand-muted "scratches" between chord accents and a highly syncopated rhythm. Notice the jarring effect the guitarist creates with the C7 and G chords, as he anticipates each chord an eighth note, or half a beat, early then holds it into the next beat. When playing this part, try to keep your pick hand moving in a flowing, unbroken down-up-down-up manner.

At section E (bar 36), Harrison (Gtr. 3) develops his arpeggiated triads from the previous four bars by applying a quicker, busier 16th-note flatpicking pattern. Note the fingerings for the Fmaj7 and F shapes in bar 37, as indicated at the beginning of the transcription. Using this fingering for Fmaj7 eliminates the need for a potentially tricky shift to the F shape that follows, as it allows you to form both chords in a single position, without having to shift your fret hand.

"SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION"

Megadeth

RECORDED BY THE "classic" Megadeth lineup of Dave Mustaine and Marty Friedman on guitars, David Ellefson on bass and Nick Menza on drums, this short (by Megadeth standards) metal masterpiece features a fairly simple but super tight and hooky main riff (see sections A and B), a sinister-sounding, chromatically-structured chorus (section D) and one of Friedman's characteristically acrobatic and tastefully lyrical and flowing solos (see section E, Gtr. 2 part).

With one notable exception, all the song's rhythm parts are picked or strummed with downstrokes, which produce a uniformly clear, punchy attack. Notice the use of palm muting (P.M.) for all the single notes on the low E string, up until the chorus. Applying this technique in this way is a key factor in replicating the tight sound of the riffs, lending the notes definition and clarity while also helping to accentuate the chord hits on the higher strings.

Commenting on the song's chorus riff back in the May 2005 issue, Mustaine said, "Having one note in a chord voicing descend while the root note stays the same is a technique I learned from listening to the Beatles. This part is a good representation of my overall approach to songwriting, which is to combine compositional and arranging elements influenced by the British Invasion with New Wave of British Heavy Metal-type guitar sounds. Since it was American blues that inspired British rock, I was really influenced by black music that had been bastardized by a bunch of limeys!

"I pick this chorus part 'upside down,' meaning that I pick the notes on the D and A strings with upstrokes, followed by a downstroke on each of the palm-muted open low E notes."

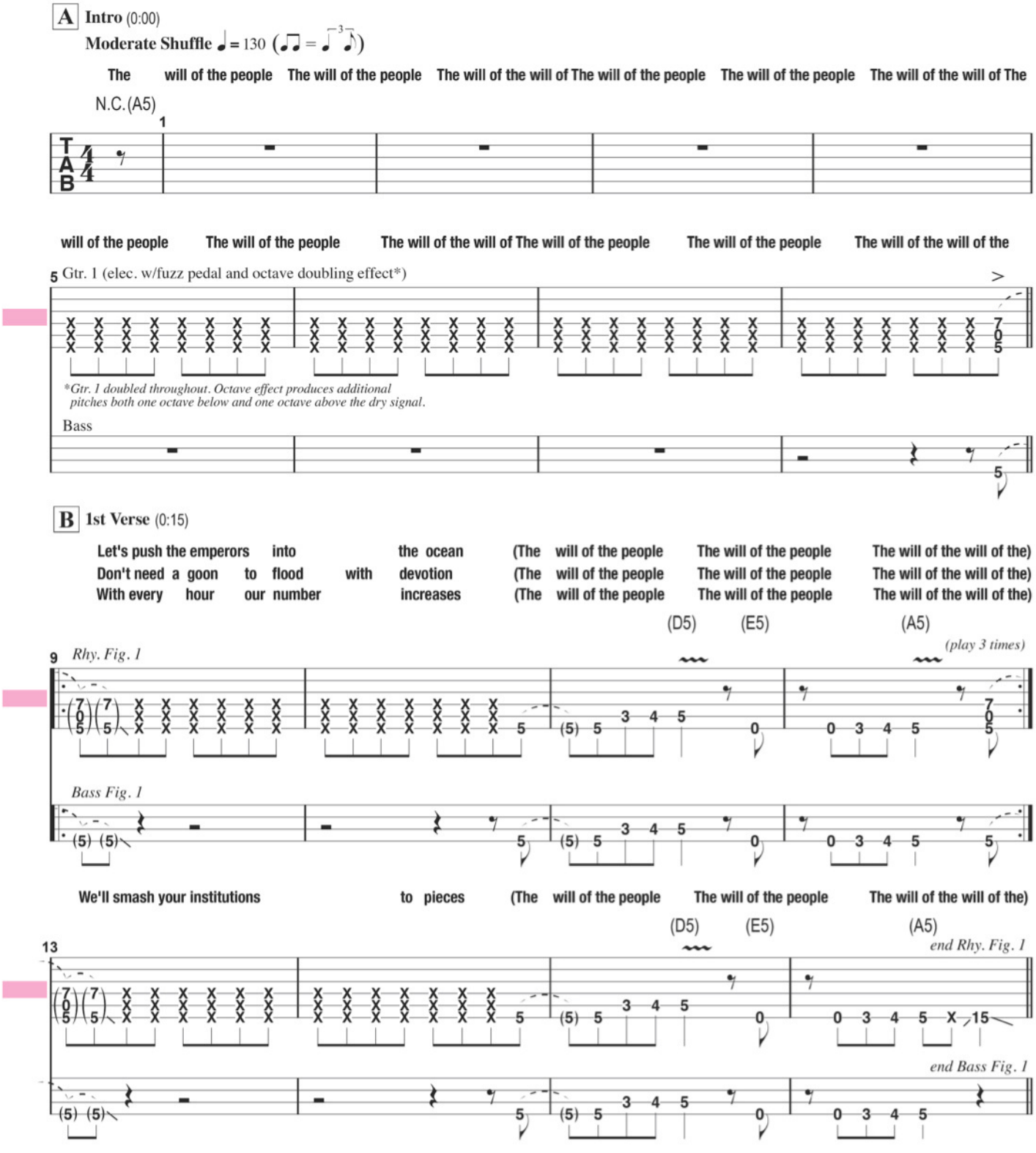
He adds, "the rhythm guitar part I play behind the solo is based on the pre-chorus [*section C*], but here I omit the hammer-on lick that fell on the upbeat of beat 3 and replace it with two palm-muted open low E eighth notes. This simpler figure leaves more room, sonically speaking, for the guitar solo to stand out."

"WILL OF THE PEOPLE"

Muse

As heard on **WILL OF THE PEOPLE**

Words and Music by MATTHEW BELLAMY • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN



"WILL OF THE PEOPLE"
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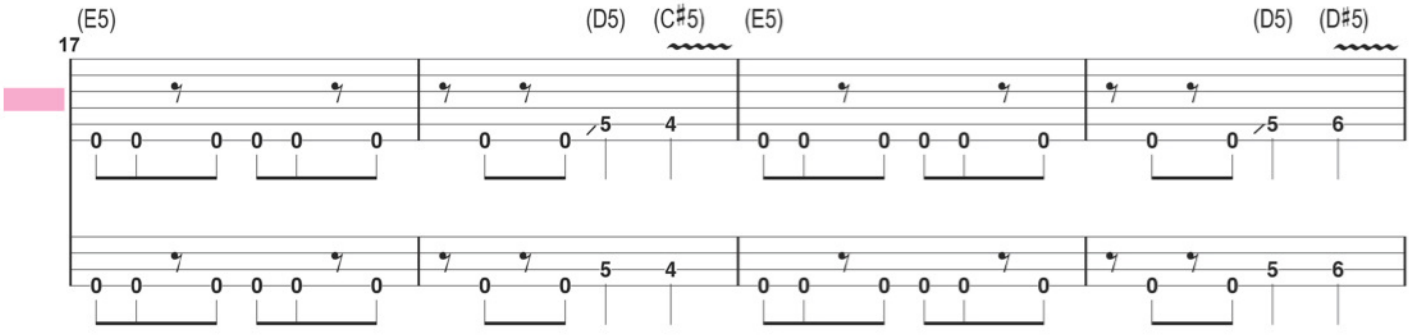
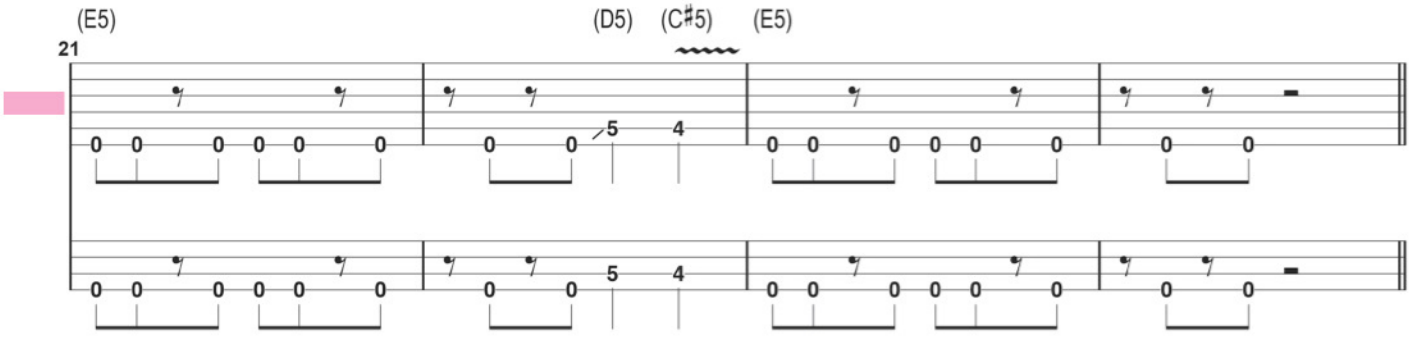
C Pre-chorus (0:45, 1:44)

We need a transformation (Hey) One we all can see
We need a transmutation (Hey) One we all conceive

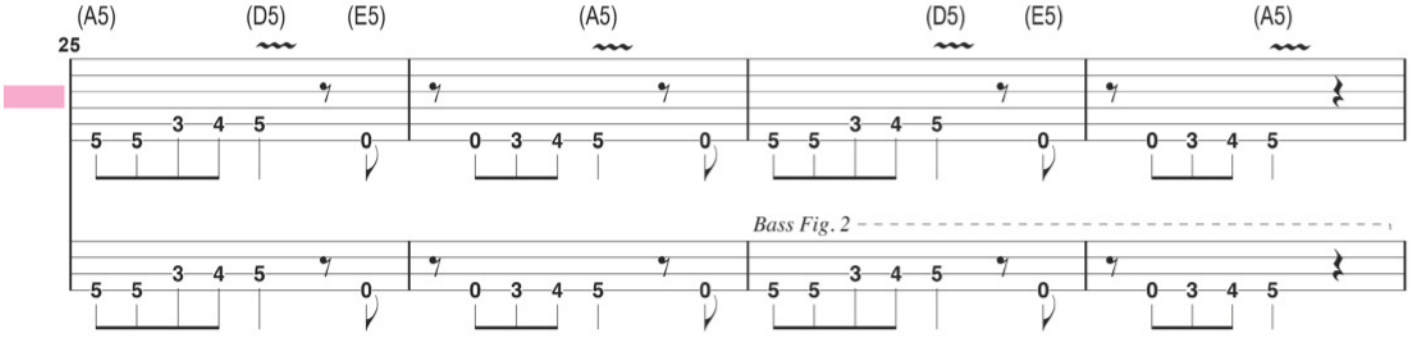


We need a revolution (Oh) So long as we stay free (The will of the will of the)



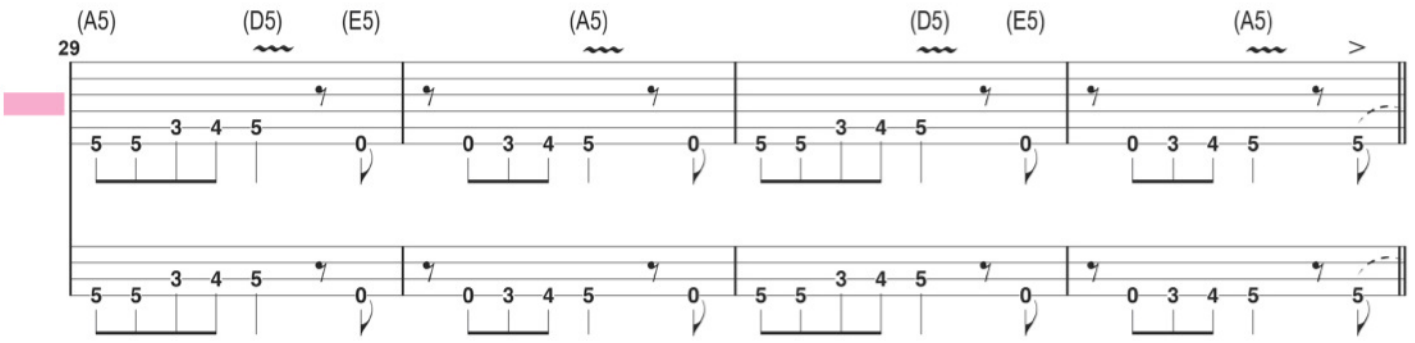
D Chorus (0:59, 1:59)

Welcome to the desecration baby We'll build you right up and we'll tear you down



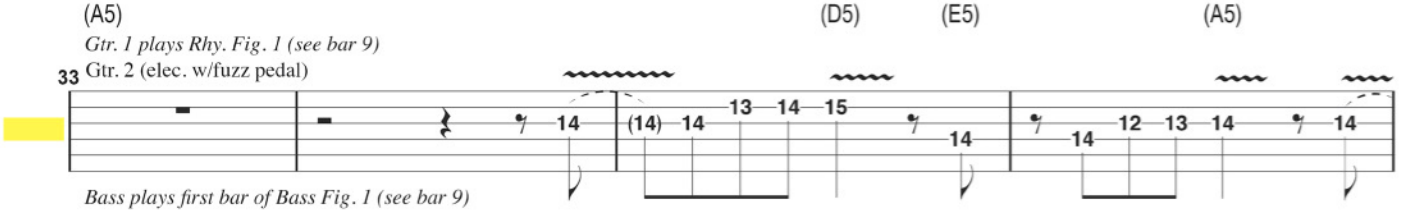
2nd time, skip ahead to F *Breakdown (bar 49)*

Welcome to the celebration baby The judges are jailed and the future is ours *2nd time:* The

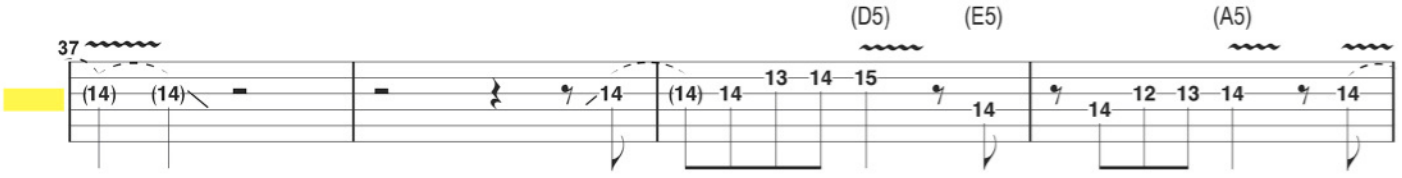


E 2nd Verse (1:14)

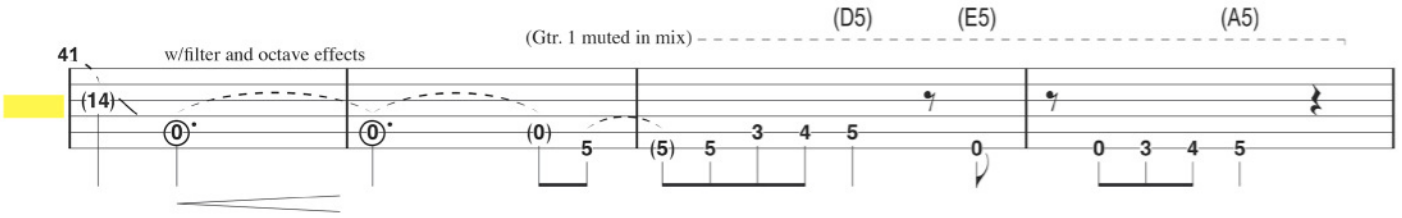
2. Free your sons and unlock your daughters



We'll throw the baby out with the bathwater

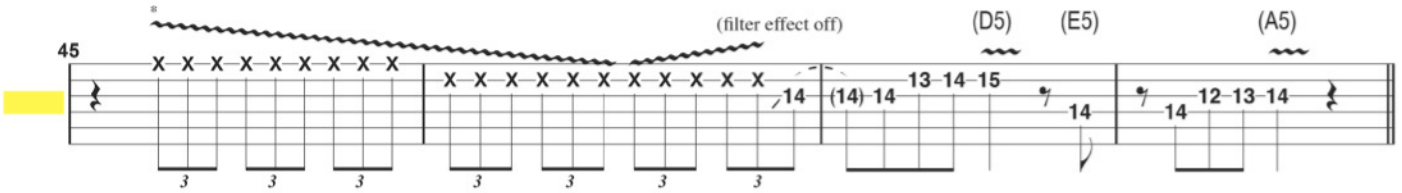


With every second our anger increases



Go back to C Pre-chorus (bar 17)

We're gonna smash your nation to pieces (The will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of the)

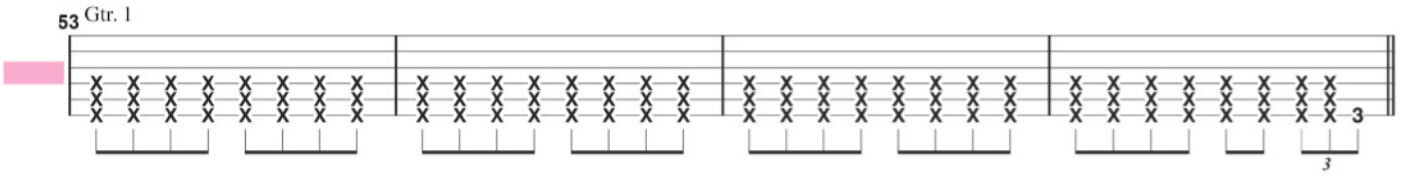


**Tap edge of pick down and up the strings in triplet rhythm.*

F Breakdown (2:13)

will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of The will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of The

will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of The will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of the



G (2:28)

will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of The will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of the

(A5) (D5) (E5) (A5) (D5) (E5) (A5)

57

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 four times (see bar 27)

will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of The will of the people The will of the people The will of the will of the

(A5) (D5) (E5) (A5) (D5) (E5) (A5)

61

H (2:43)

Woo

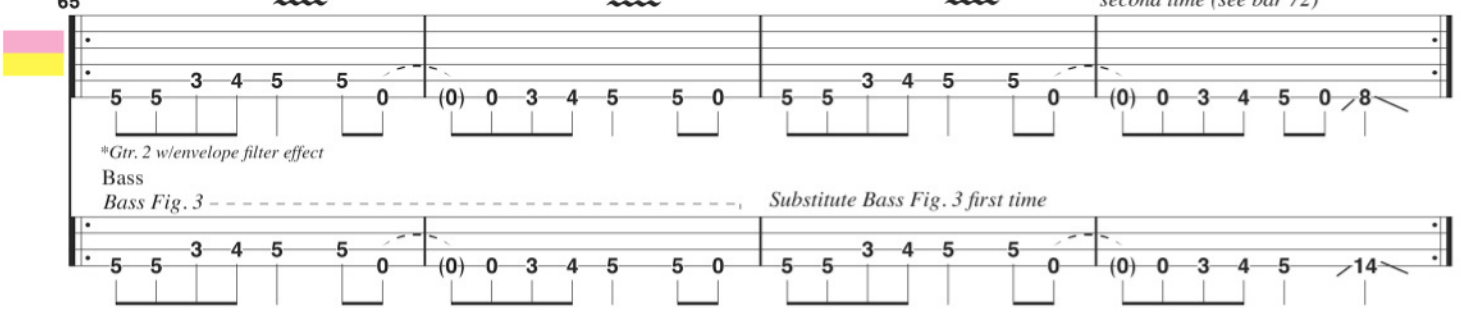
The will of the will of the

(A5) (D5) (E5) (A5) (A5) (D5) (E5) (A5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2*

Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill. 1 second time (see bar 72)

65



**Gtr. 2 w/envelope filter effect*

Bass

Bass Fig. 3

Substitute Bass Fig. 3 first time

I **Outro** (2:58)

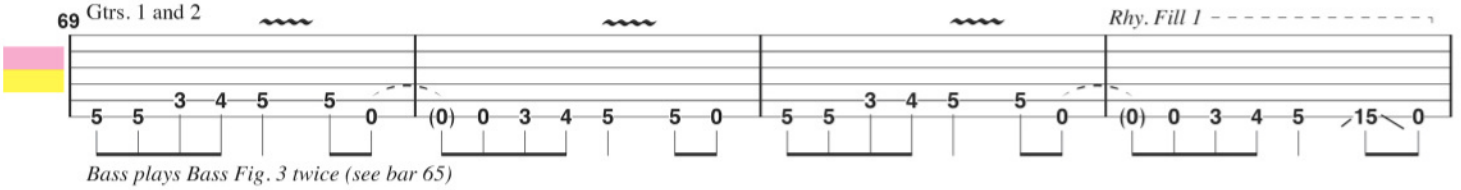
Welcome to the desecration baby We'll build you right up and we'll tear you down

(A5) (D5) (E5) (A5) (A5) (D5) (E5) (A5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

69

Rhy. Fill 1



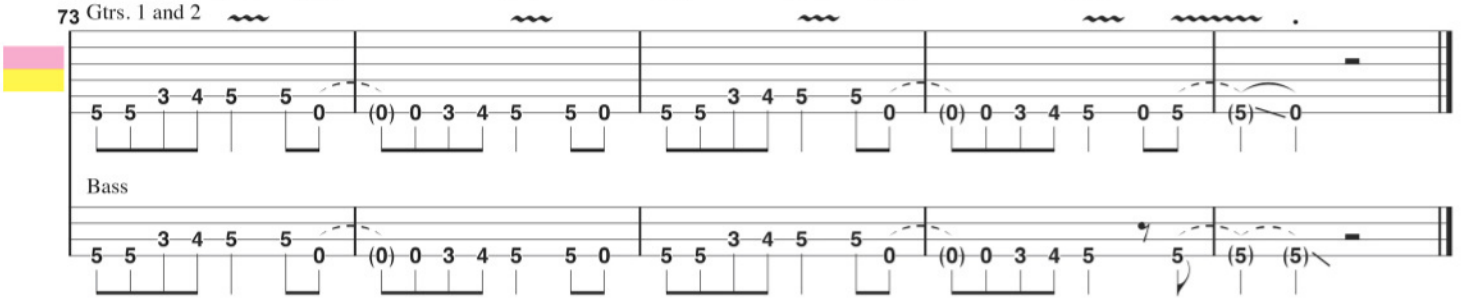
Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 twice (see bar 65)

Welcome to the celebration baby The judges are jailed and the future is ours

(A5) (D5) (E5) (A5) (A5) (D5) (E5) (A5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

73



Bass

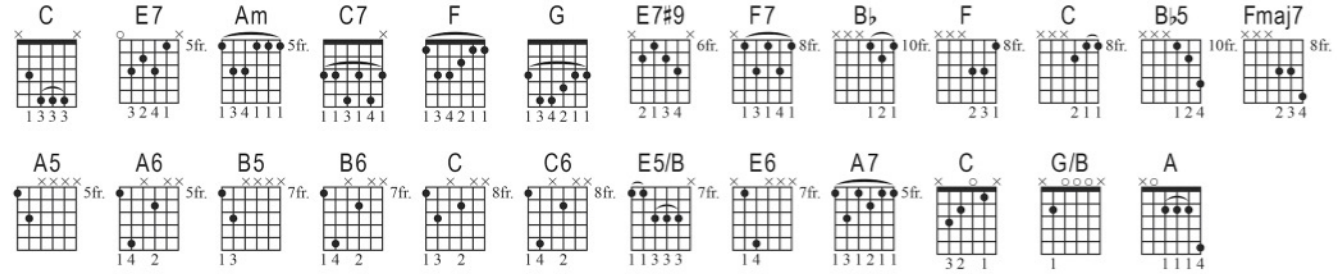
"YOU NEVER GIVE ME YOUR MONEY"

The Beatles

As heard on **ABBEY ROAD**

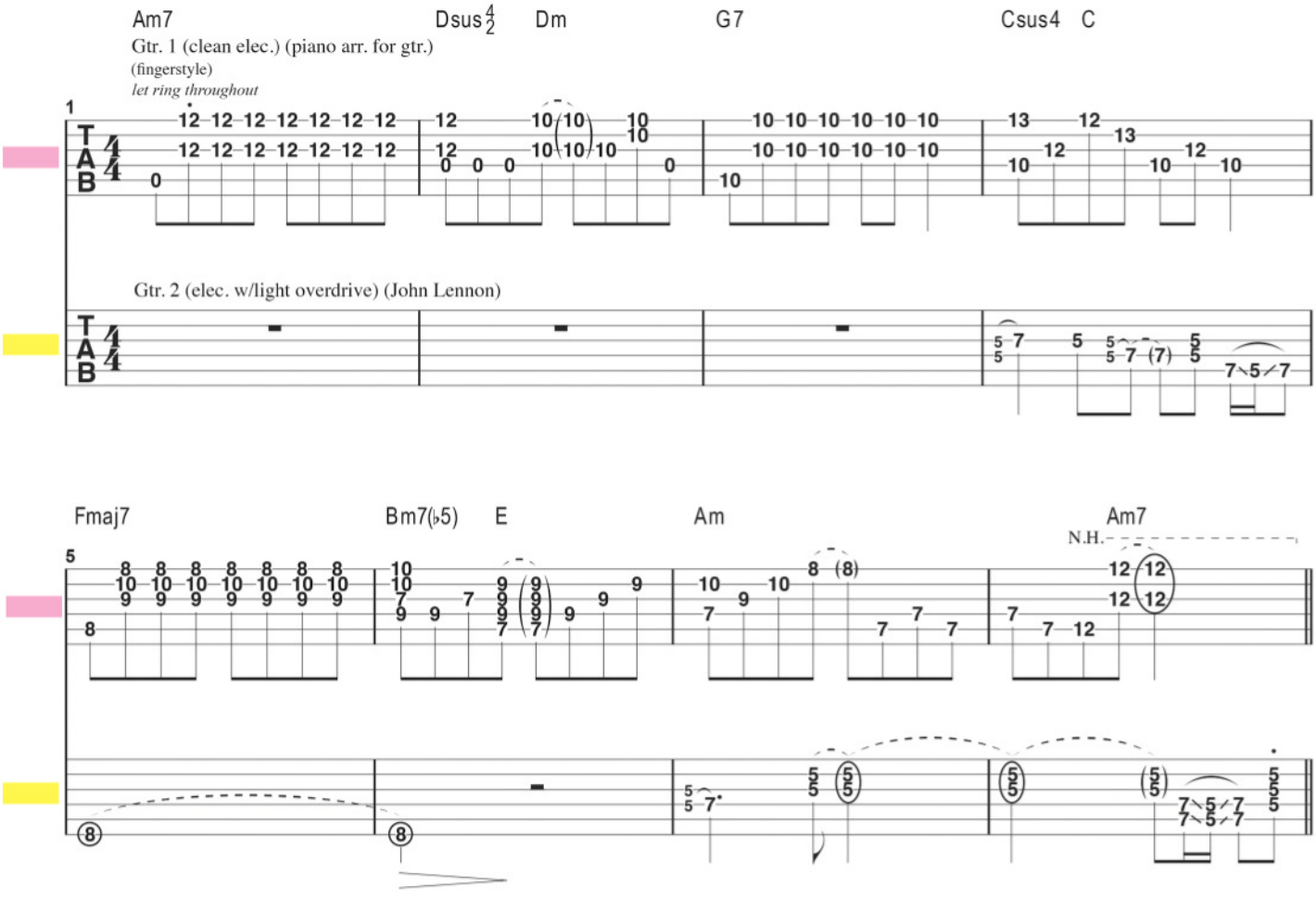
Words and Music by JOHN LENNON *and* PAUL McCARTNEY • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

Chords for Gtrs. 2 and 3



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately Slow ♩ = 83



"YOU NEVER GIVE ME YOUR MONEY"
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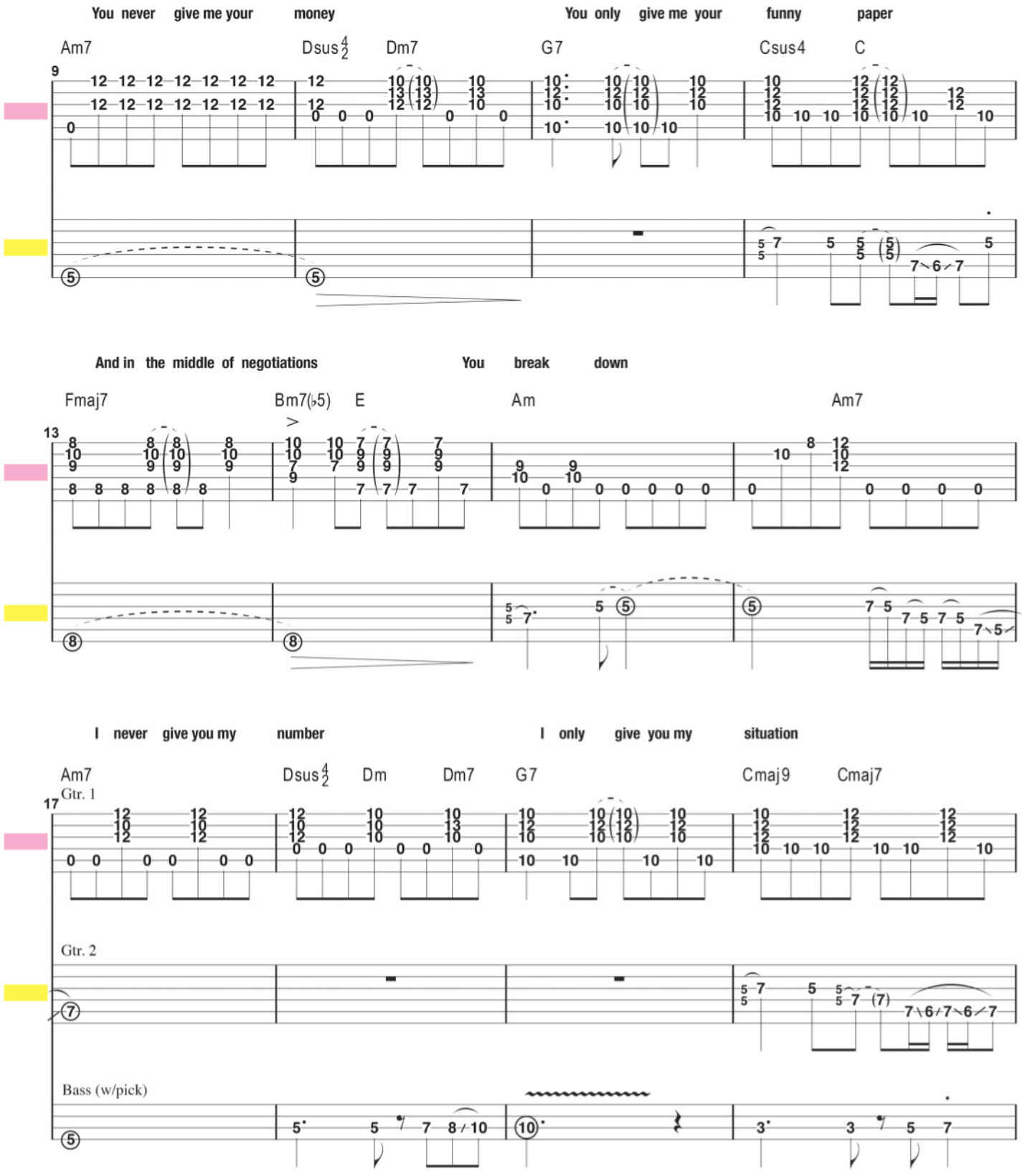
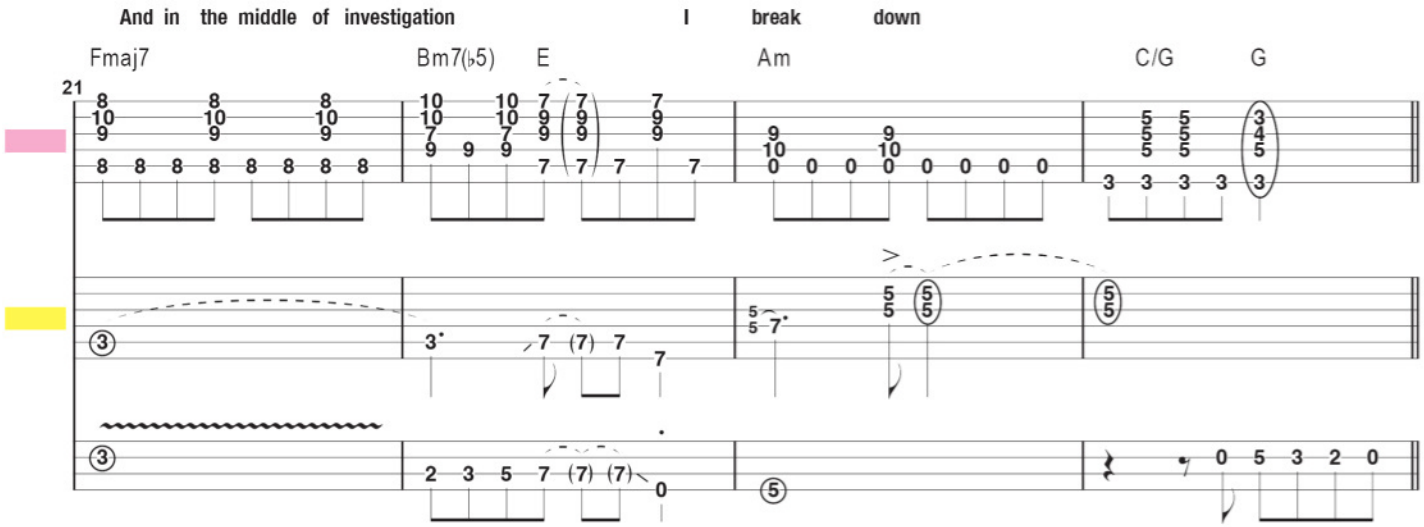
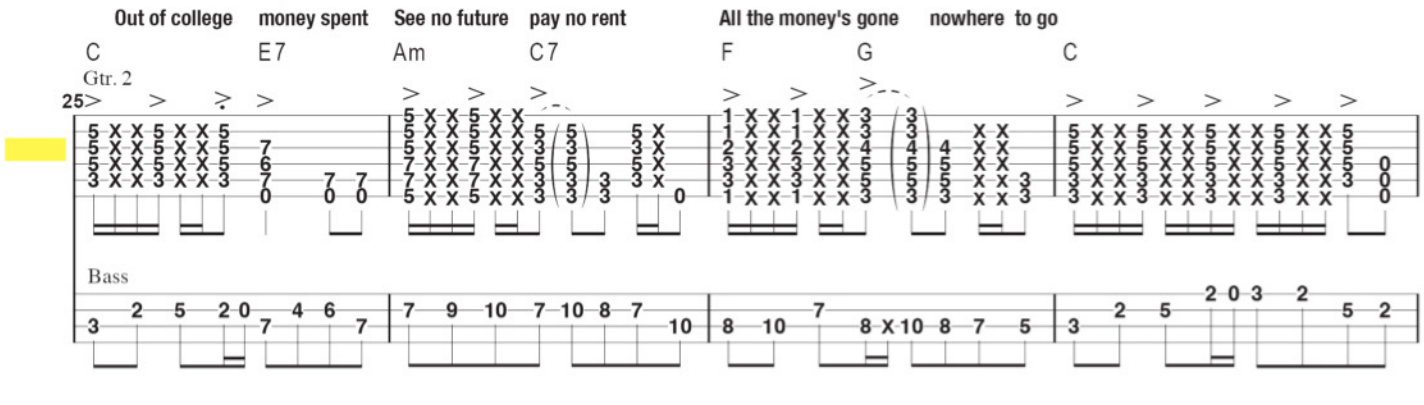
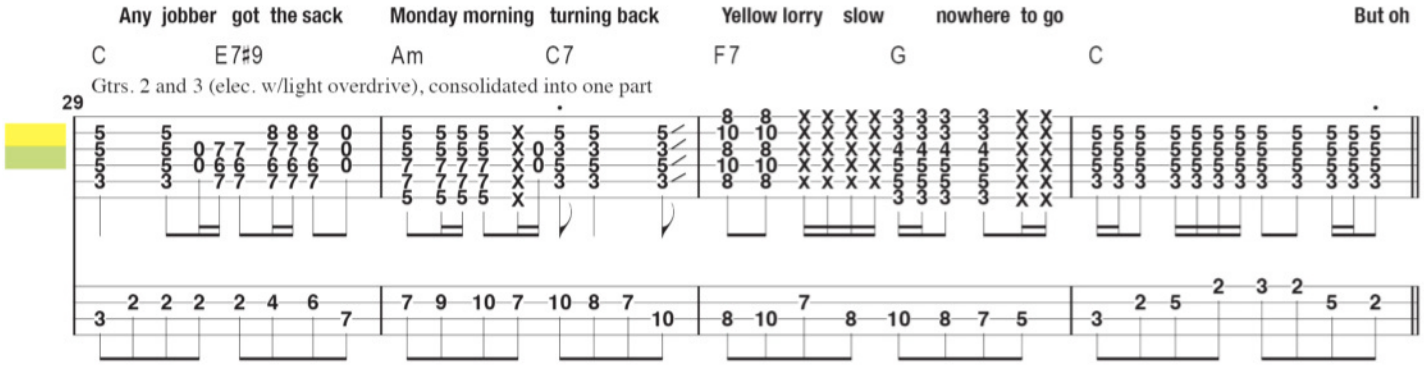
B **1st Verse** (0:23)



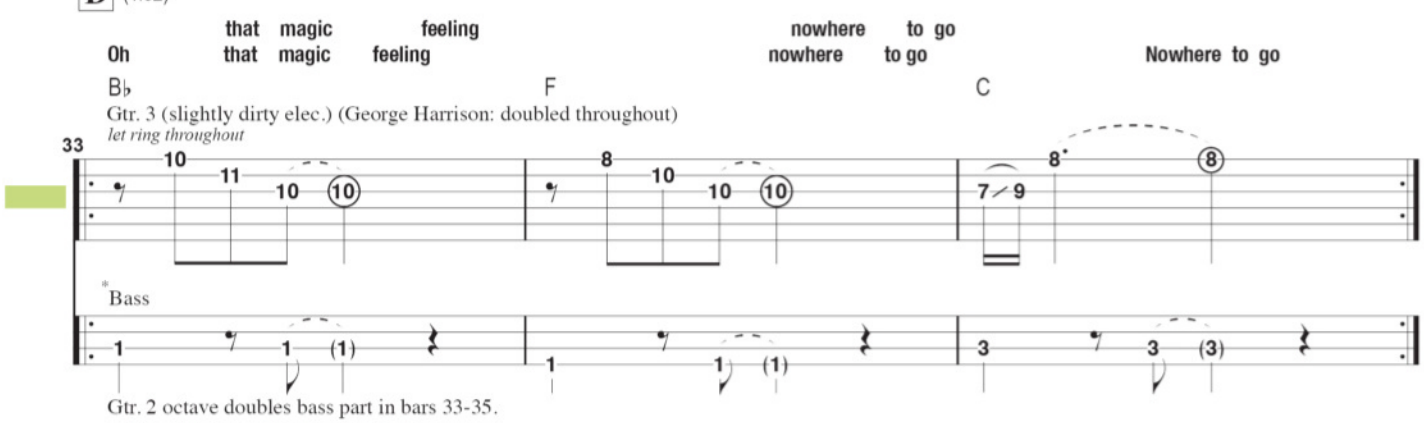


C **2nd Verse** (1:10)

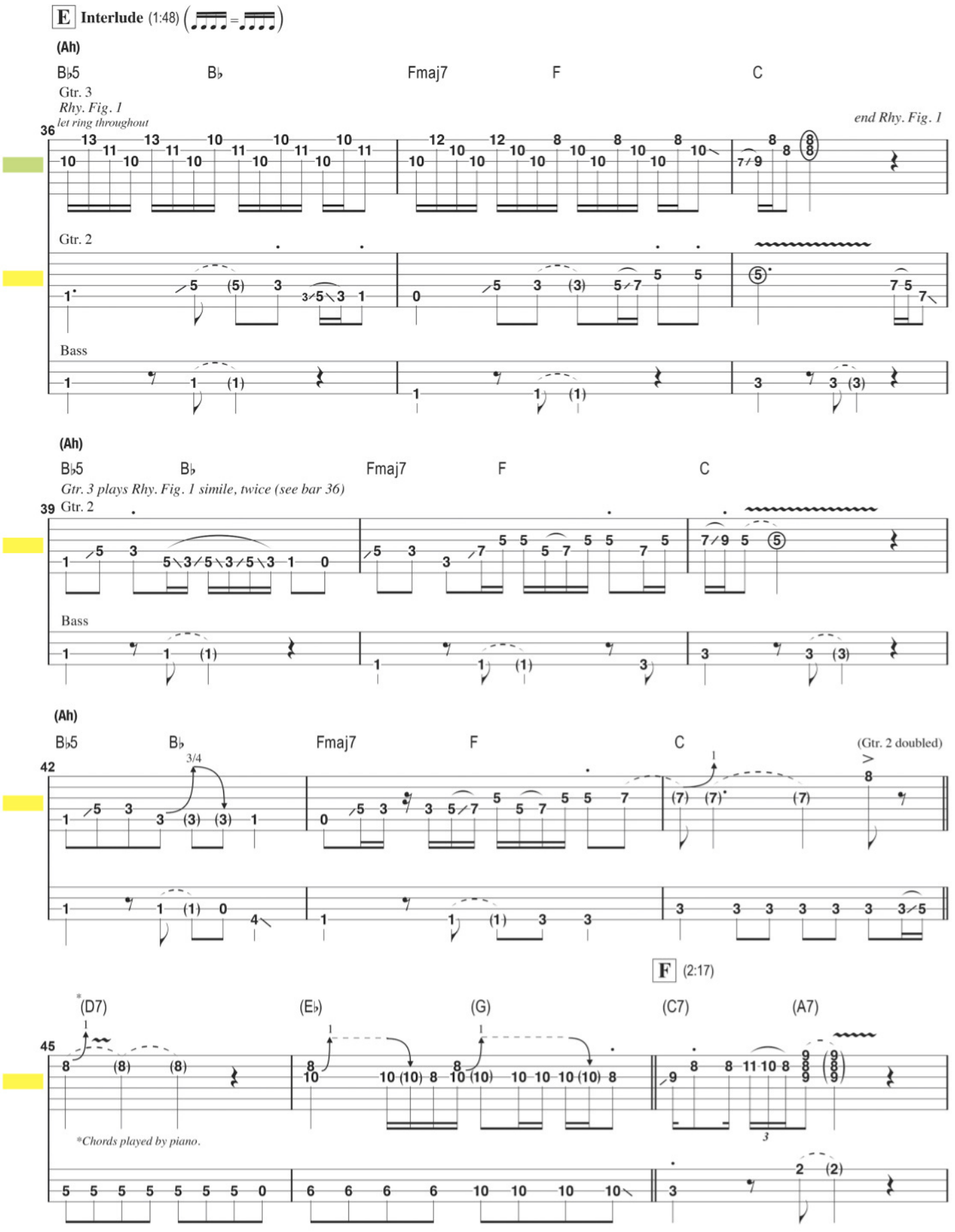


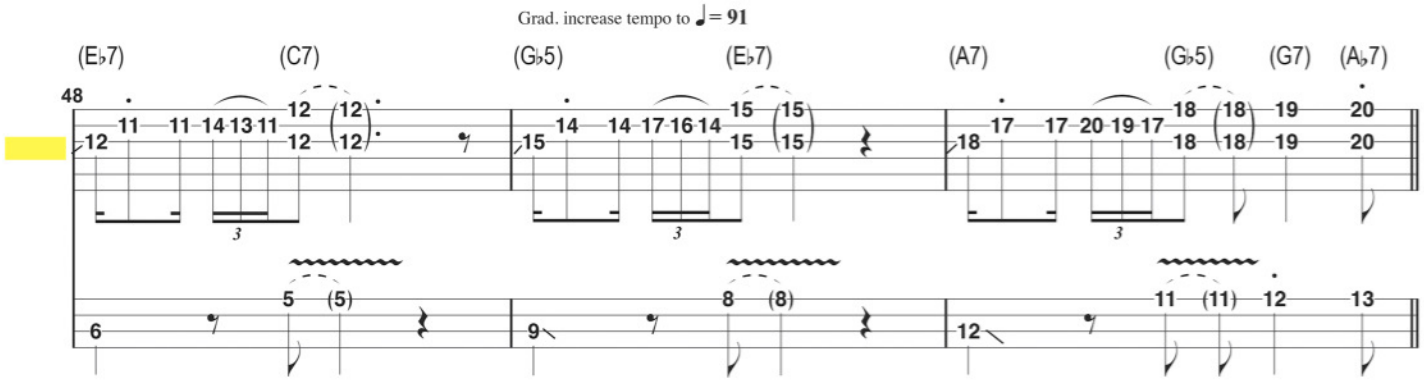


D (1:32)

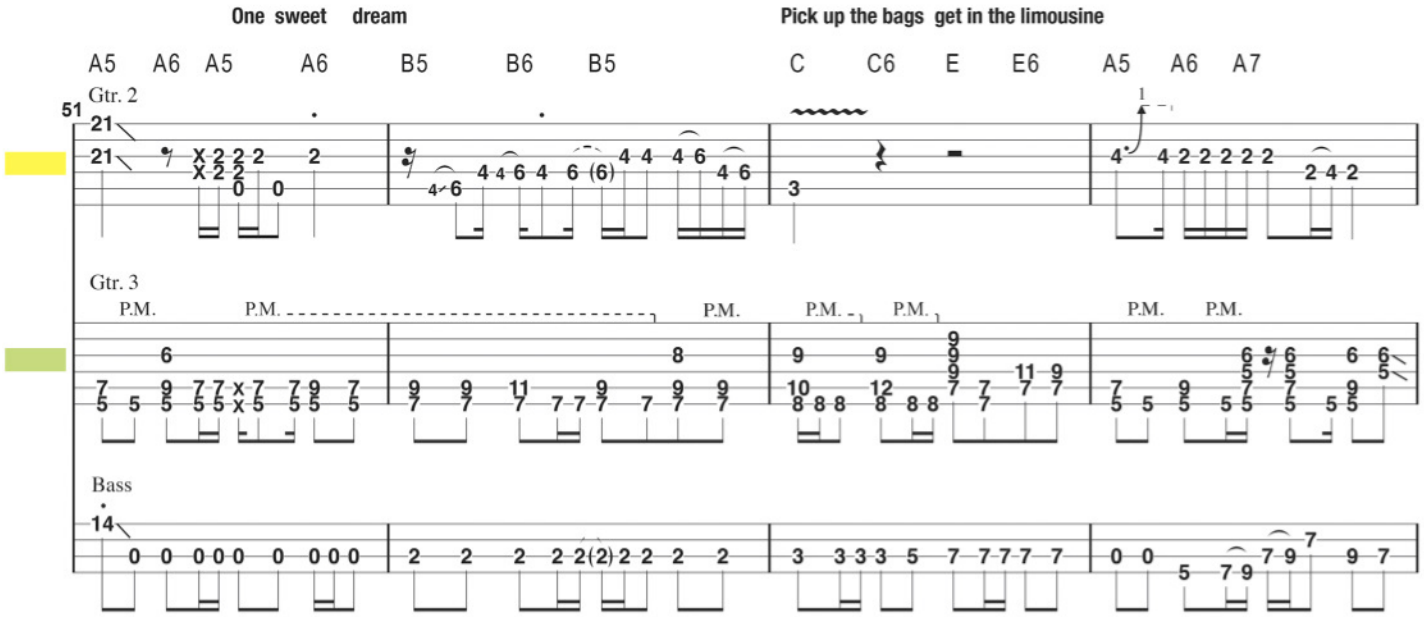


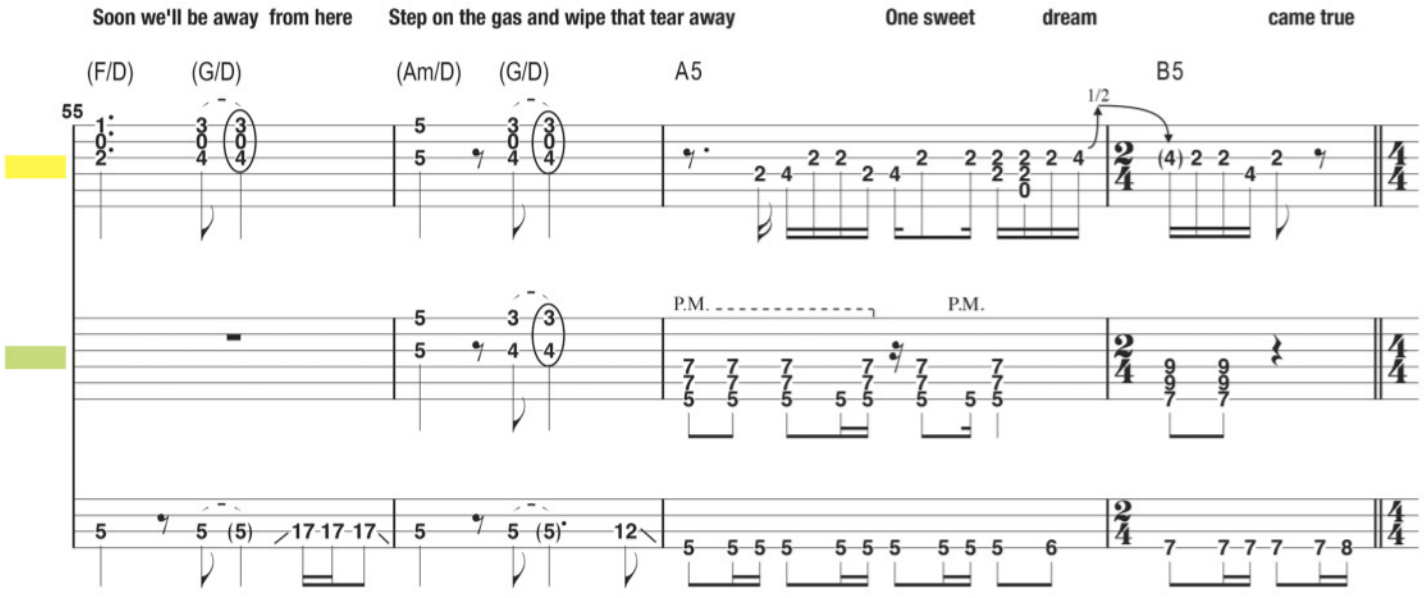
Gtr. 2 octave doubles bass part in bars 33-35.


E Interlude (1:48)
(Ah)
B♭5 B♭ Fmaj7 F C
Gtr. 3
Rhy. Fig. 1
let ring throughout
end Rhy. Fig. 1
36
Gtr. 2
Bass
(Ah)
B♭5 B♭ Fmaj7 F C
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile, twice (see bar 36)
39
Gtr. 2
Bass
(Ah)
B♭5 B♭ Fmaj7 F C
(Gtr. 2 doubled)
42
3/4
F (2:17)
*(D7) (E♭) (G) (C7) (A7)
45
*Chords played by piano.



G **3rd Verse** (2:28)





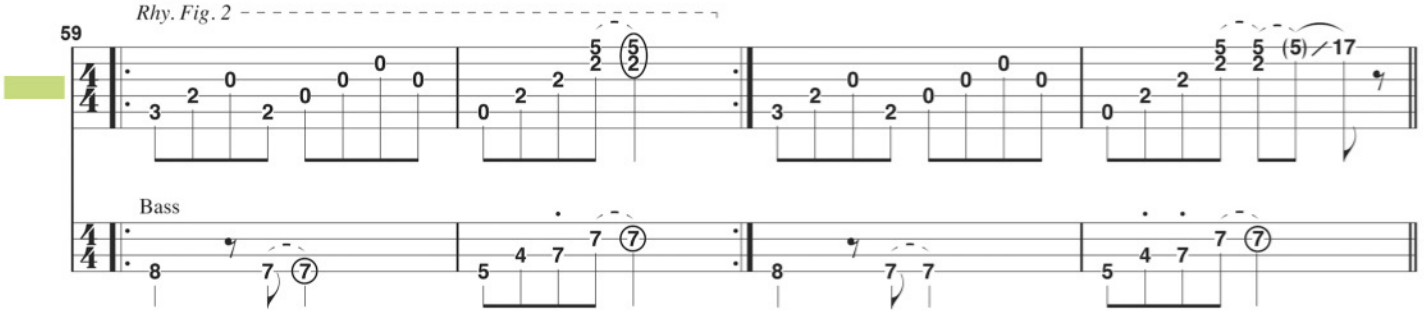
H (2:48)

today Came true
today Came true today Yes it did Ah ah

C G/B A C G/B A

Gtr. 3
Rhy. Fig. 2

59



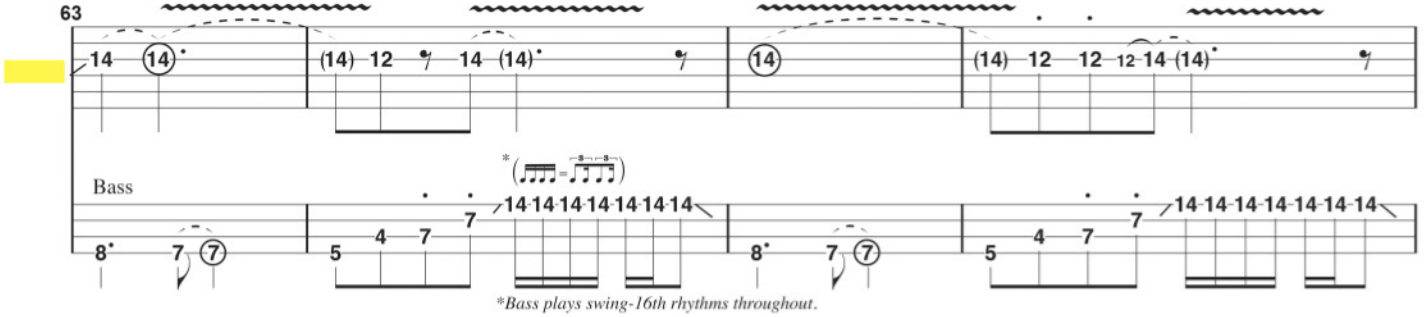
I **Outro** (3:04)

ah ah ah... One two three four five six seven All good children go to heaven

C G/B A C G/B A

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 through fade (see bar 59)
Gtr. 2 (w/overdriven tone)

63

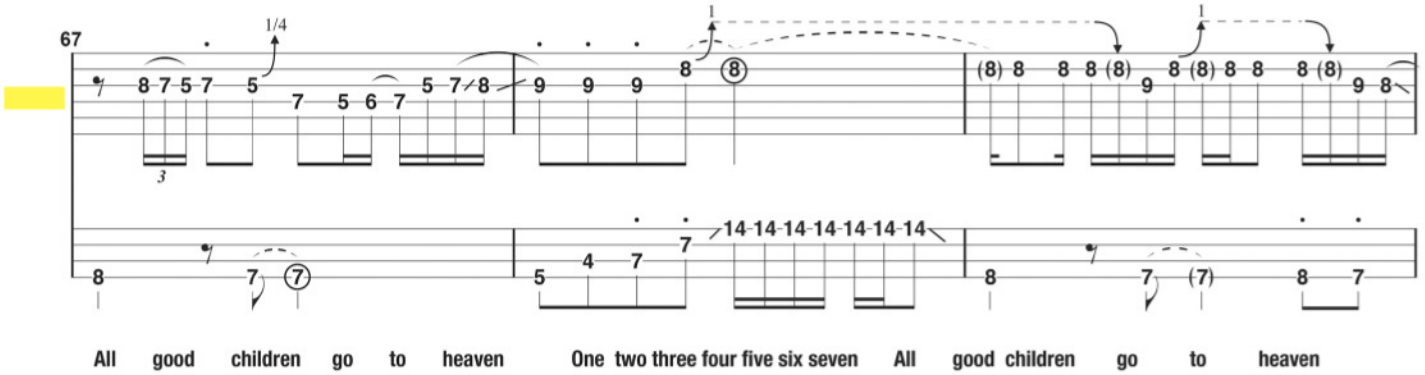


**Bass plays swing-16th rhythms throughout.*

One two three four five six seven All good children go to heaven One two three four five six seven

C G/B A C G/B

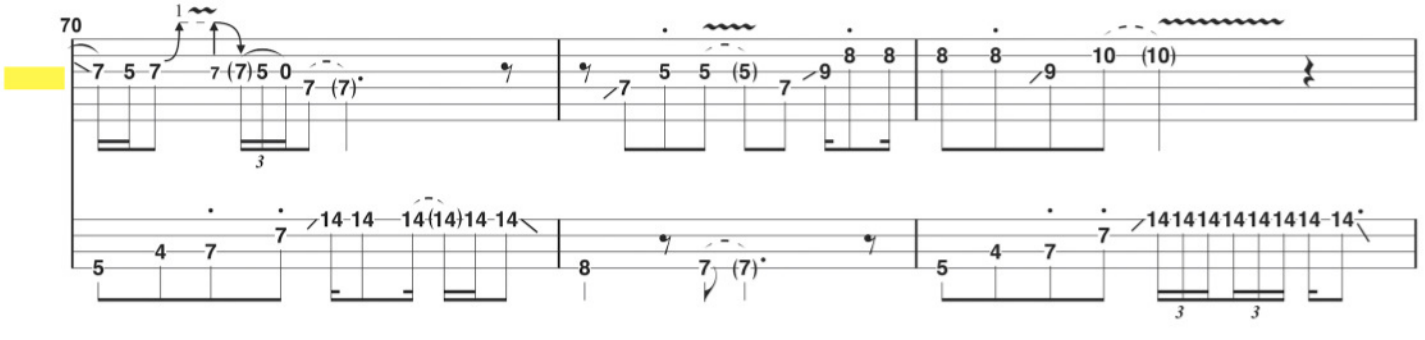
67

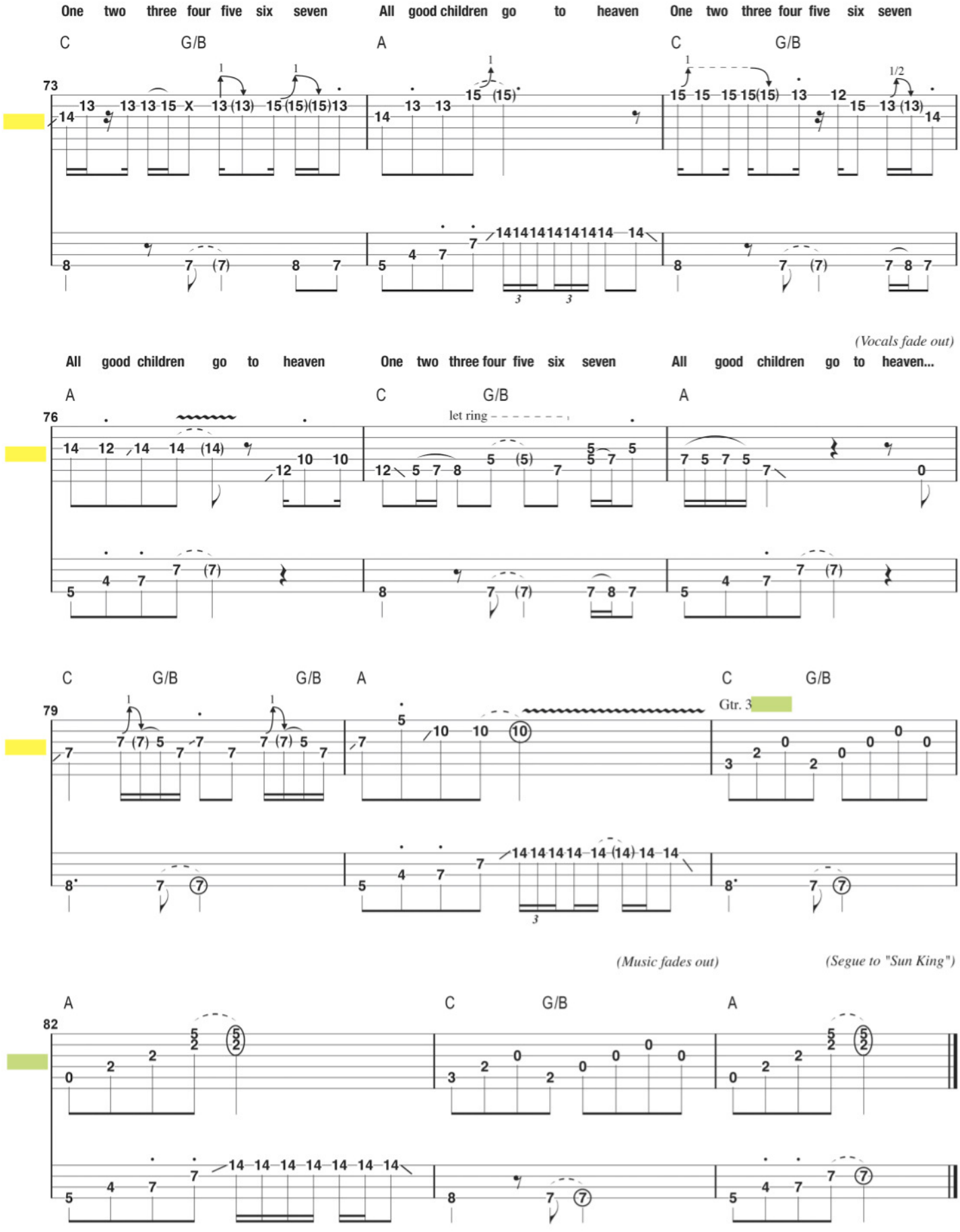


All good children go to heaven One two three four five six seven All good children go to heaven

A C G/B A

70




One two three four five six seven
All good children go to heaven
One two three four five six seven
C
G/B
A
C
G/B
73
(Vocals fade out)
All good children go to heaven
One two three four five six seven
All good children go to heaven...
A
C
G/B
A
76
let ring
C
G/B
G/B
A
C
G/B
79
Gtr. 3
(Music fades out)
(Segue to "Sun King")
A
C
G/B
A
82

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"SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION"

Megadeth

As heard on **COUNTDOWN TO EXTINCTION**

Words and Music by **DAVE MUSTAINE** • *Transcribed by* **ADAM PERLMUTTER** *and* **MATT SCHARFGLASS**

A Intro (0:00) (0:15)

Moderately Fast ♩ = 142

*Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)

1 ** P.M. F5 E5 * F5 E5 P.M.

*doubled

**orchestra and opera sound effects

*repeat previous chord

Bass w/pick

B Verses (0:19, 1:14, 2:53)

1. You take a mortal man
2. Acting like a robot
3. The earth starts to rumble

4 F5 E5 F5 E5 F5 E5

Rhy. Fig. 1 P.M.

Bass Fig. 1 end Bass Fig. 1

and its World put him in metal powers control brain corrodes fall

8 (repeat previous four measures) 4

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see meas. 3)

Watch You him try Warring to become take for the a god its pulse heavens

12 4

"SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION"
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C Pre-chorus (0:43, 1:38, 3:17)

Watch people's heads a-roll a - roll
before the head explodes explodes
A peaceful man stands tall a - tall

F5 E5 A5 A♭5 G5 A5 A♭5 G5 A5

Rhy. Fig. 2

16 Gtr. 1 P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass

a - roll
explodes
a - tall

A♭5 G5 A5 A♭5 G5 A5 A♭5 G5 A5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 three times (see meas. 18)

20 Bass

A♭5 G5 A5 A♭5 G5 N.C.(D5)

23 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

D Chorus (0:56, 1:51, 3:31)

Just like the Pied Piper led rats

N.C.(E5) (C5)

Rhy. Fig. 3

26 *let ring* *let ring* *let ring* *let ring* *let ring*

(2nd and 3rd times) skip ahead to meas. 36

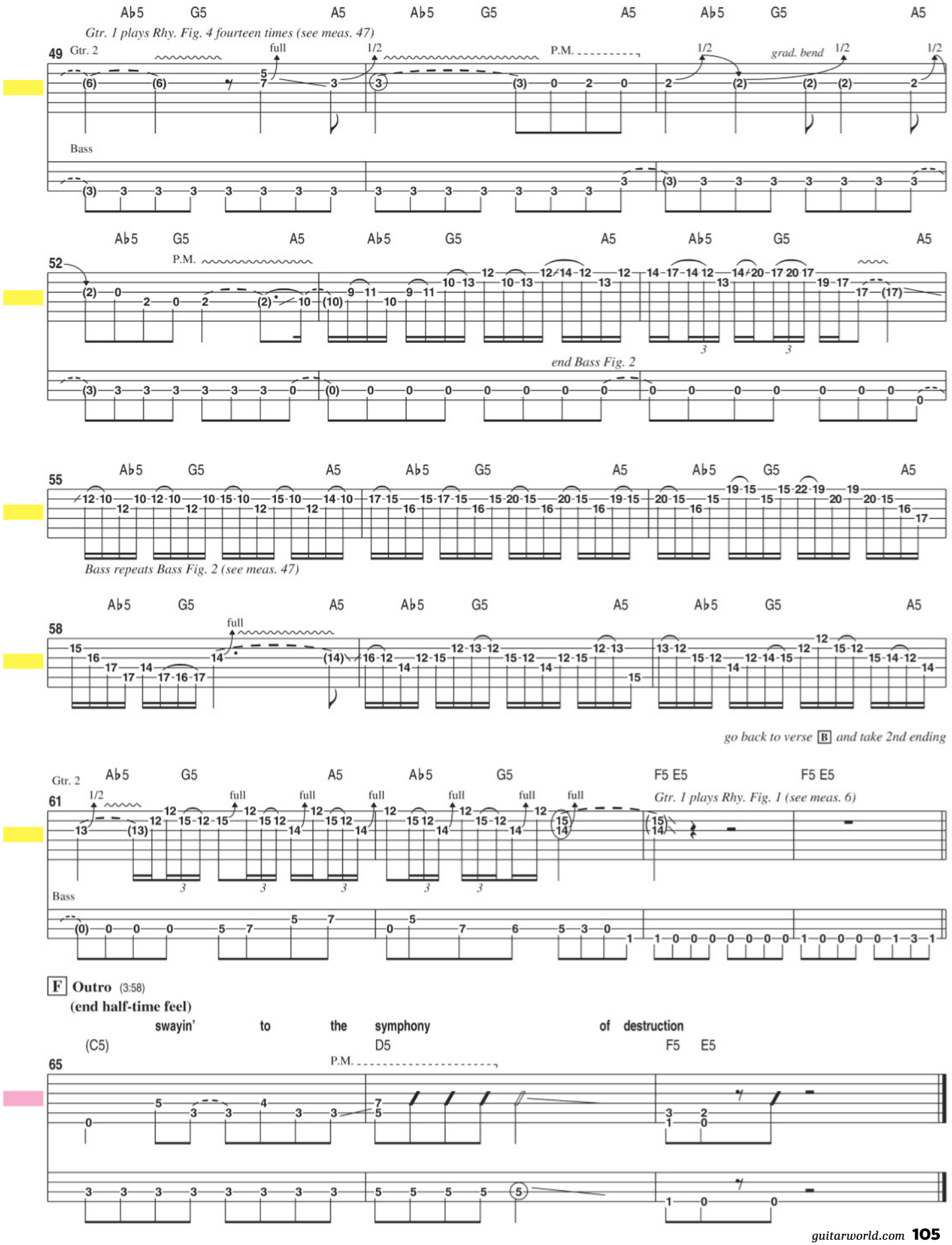
through the streets we dance like marionettes swayin' to the

(D5) (E5) (C5)

end Rhy. Fig. 3

29 *let ring* *let ring* *let ring* *let ring* *let ring*

symphony of destruction
D5
F5 E5
F5 E5
symphony
D5
33
P.M.
P.M.
P.M.
w/half-time feel (2:05, 3:45)
Just like the Pied Piper led rats through the streets
N.C.(E5)
(C5)
(D5)
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 twice (see meas. 26)
37 Bass
(2nd time) skip ahead to outro F
we dance like marionettes swayin' to the symphony
41
(E5)
(C5)
(D5)
(end half-time feel)
swayin' to the symphony of destruction
(C5)
D5
A5
45 Gtr. 1
let ring
let ring
P.M.
P.M.
Bass
E Guitar Solo (2:22)
A♭5 G5 A5 A♭5 G5 A5
47 Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.)
1/2
Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fig. 4
P.M.
P.M.
P.M.
Bass
Bass Fig. 2


Ab5 G5 A5
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 fourteen times (see meas. 47)
49 Gtr. 2
full
1/2
P.M.
grad. bend
Bass
52
end Bass Fig. 2
55
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 2 (see meas. 47)
58
go back to verse B and take 2nd ending
61 Gtr. 2
F5 E5
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see meas. 6)
Bass
F Outro (3:58)
(end half-time feel)
swayin' to the symphony of destruction
(C5) D5 F5 E5
65

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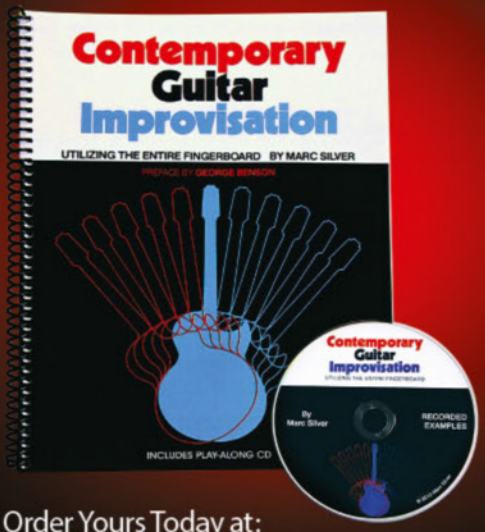

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BY CHRIS GILL

1983-85 ROLAND SDE-3000 DIGITAL DELAY

RACKMOUNT EFFECT UNIT

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR musicians has advanced significantly since the first relatively affordable digital delays emerged in the early Eighties. So why have so many studios and guitarists refused to give up their Roland SDE-3000 rackmount units, which came out 40 years ago in 1983?

The SDE-3000 remained a permanent fixture in the stage racks of Eddie Van Halen and Steve Vai from 1985 onwards, and it instantly became a legendary effect found in Bob Bradshaw racks built for studio guitarists Steve Lukather, Michael Landau and Dann Huff. World class producer/engineer/mixer Bob Clearmountain still frequently uses the 3000 on vocal recordings, and Eric Clapton, Neil Young and dozens of other pros have relied upon the 3000 at various stages of their careers. After the model's discontinuation in 1985 when Roland released the "new and improved" SDE-2500 with 64 presets and MIDI, demand for the 3000 grew so significantly over the years that Roland reissued it in the early Nineties as the SDE-3000A, which was identical in every way... except for the "A" on the front panel.

By today's standards, the SDE-3000 is primitive, but back in 1983 it was state-of-the-art and carried a hefty price tag of $1,099 (about $3,350 today adjusted for inflation). Its proprietary 63H101 CMOS gate array IC and 12-bit analog-to-digital converters, companded to 16-bit performance, delivered a maximum frequency range of 10Hz to 17kHz. Despite having specs that seem ho-hum today, the SDE-3000 sounds remarkably smooth, pristine and musical, which is the reason for its perennial success rather than the usual gritty, grungy lo-fi nostalgia for early digital effects.

A significant factor of the 3000's appeal to guitarists is that Roland's Yoshi Ikegami, who designed the original unit, was a guitarist himself, so he tweaked the circuit and selected components partly based on how well they worked for guitar. Certain technical imperfections, like its inaccurate sampling rate clock, also make the delays sound more organic than the robot-like perfection of today's sophisticated units.

Features of the SDE-3000 include a maximum delay time of 1500ms at full fidelity, which could be doubled to 3000ms with a front panel 2x button that halved the sampling rate and reduced its high frequency response to 8kHz. A 1.5x Delay Time knob on the rear expanded delay times to 2250ms (full frequency) or 4500ms (8kHz peak), but using it disengaged the modulation section. Users could program chorus, flanging and vibrato effects with the modulation section's rate and depth controls (triangle wave modulation only), greatly assisted by the ability to precisely program delay times in 0.1ms increments from 1 to 10ms and 1.0ms increments from 10 to 1500ms.

Other cool features include a Filter button that engages lo- and high-cut filter EQ settings that generate warmer, darker echo-style repeats, a Hold function that engages infinite repeats (for primitive looper applications), and the wonderfully named Playmate function — a very early tap tempo feature where the first tap reset delay time to zero, the second tap started the clock and the third stopped it. Eight presets store delay time, feedback and output settings plus modulation rate and depth, and users can scroll through presets with a footswitch.

The Boss DD-2 and early iterations of the DD-3 contain the same 63H101 IC "long chip," but while some say they're basically an SDE-3000 in a stomp box, many of the 3000's key features like modulation are missing, and the shorter maximum delay time and lower 10Hz to 8kHz frequency response aren't as impressive. The newly announced Boss SDE-3000D and SDE-3000EVH are truly an SDE-3000 (actually two of them) in a stomp box, meticulously designed by an expert team of pros with golden ears to perfectly duplicate the original unit's sound and elusive musical *je ne sais quoi*.

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

WET/DRY/WET SPACIOUS "REVERB"

Left unit Time: *400,* ***Feedback:*** *20*
Out: *30,* ***Rate:*** *00,* ***Depth:*** *00*
Right unit Time: *800,* ***Feedback:*** *15*
Out: *30,* ***Rate****: 00,* ***Depth:*** *00*
This setup requires three separate amps and cabinets, with the dry (no delay) signal going to the center amp and the 3000's Mixed outputs going to respective left and right amps.

CHORUS

Time: *25,* ***Feedback:*** *00,* ***Out:*** *65,* ***Rate:*** *40,* ***Depth:*** *99; Filter, Delay Phase and Mod buttons engaged*

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